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Fair faces, like flowers, gladden the whole world. Nothing can so well ensure a clear, spotless complexion as pure blood; nothing can impart such a blush-rose bloom as a brisk circulation; nothing can make the eyes so bright, the hair so glossy, the steps so elastic, as a nervous system that fails in none of its intricate and important functions. Why are so many women hysterical, fretful, headachy, depressed, tired, worn-feeling and worn-looking.

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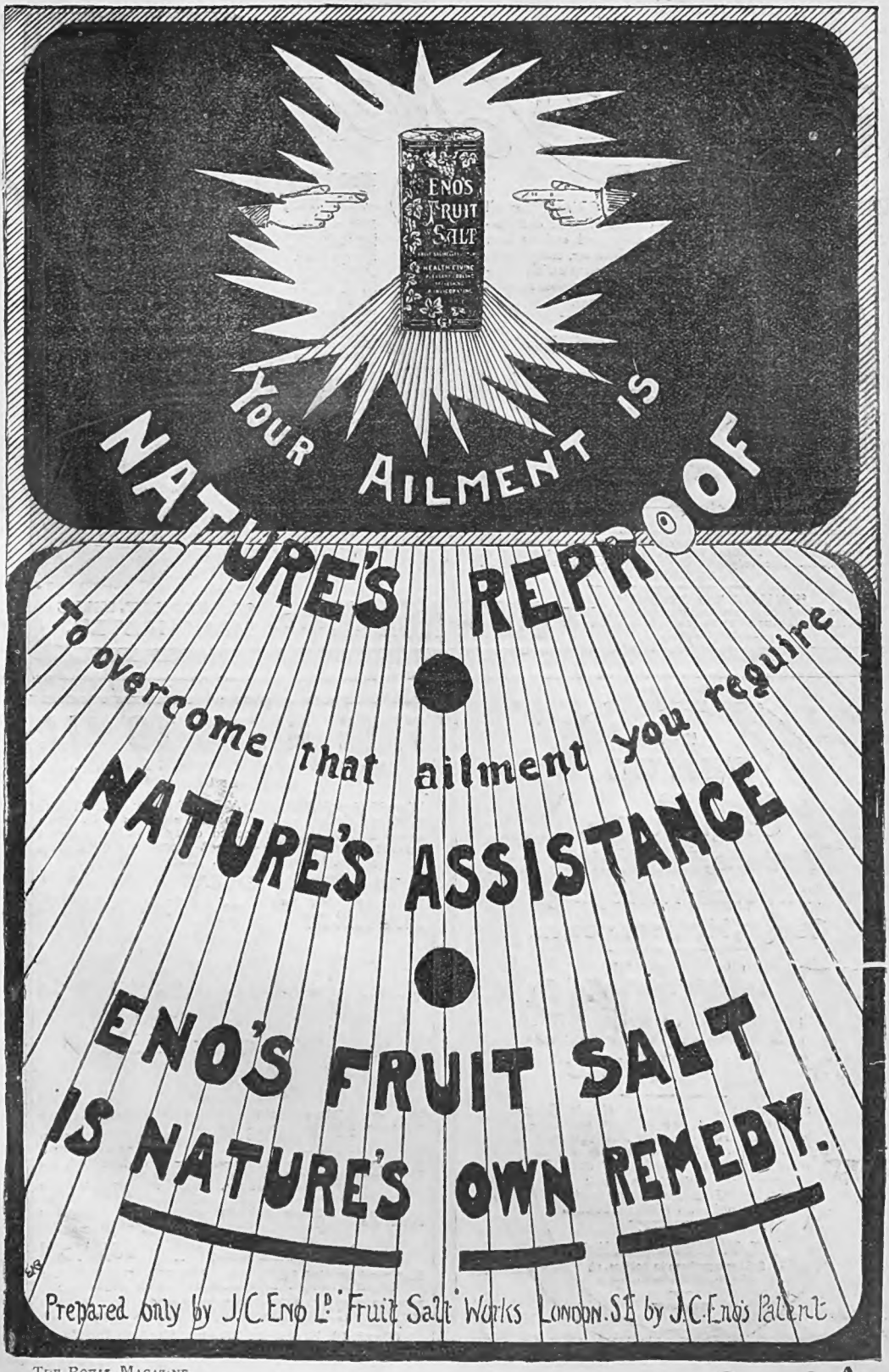

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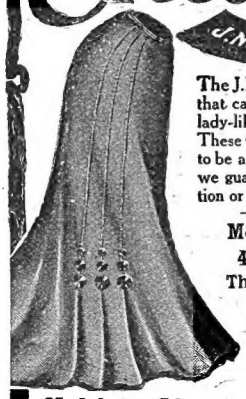
Entirely New FASHIONS

J.N. QUALITY



The J.N. Fashions for Spring 1905 are all that can be desired in point of style—lady-like, becoming, and entirely new. These Garments, however, must be seen to be appreciated. Send us a trial order—we guarantee to give complete satisfaction or return your money.

Model 426. 10/6

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The make and finish are exemplary. The tailor-stitched band shown on the collar fronts, and cuffs is neatly edged with satinette binding. Full length 40 ins. Supplied in **Fashionable Dark Grey Tweed**, and in **Plain Black Cloth**. Price **10/6**. Carr. **6d.** ex. Stock Sizes fit figures up to 38 ins. bust

Model 426. 10/6

Model 424. 10/6

Dainty, Lady-like, and New. Even our sketch does faint justice to its charm. Supplied in **J.N. Special Zibeline** and **J.N. Cheviot Serge**, arranged with the new Cross-over Bodice showing Vest and Collar of Fancy **Velvetsen** and Braid trimmings, as sketch. Yoke and sleeves lined. The Skirt is made amply wide, and fits the figure in true tailor fashion. Complete for **10/6**. Carriage 6d. extra. To fit figures 34, 36 and 38 ins. Bust. Larger sizes to measure for **2/6** extra.

Skirt alone, 5/6, carriage 5d. extra.

Colours: Black, Navy, Brown, Myrtle, Grey, Heliotrope, Wedgwood, Old Rose, Royal, Electric, &c.

Model 275. 5/11

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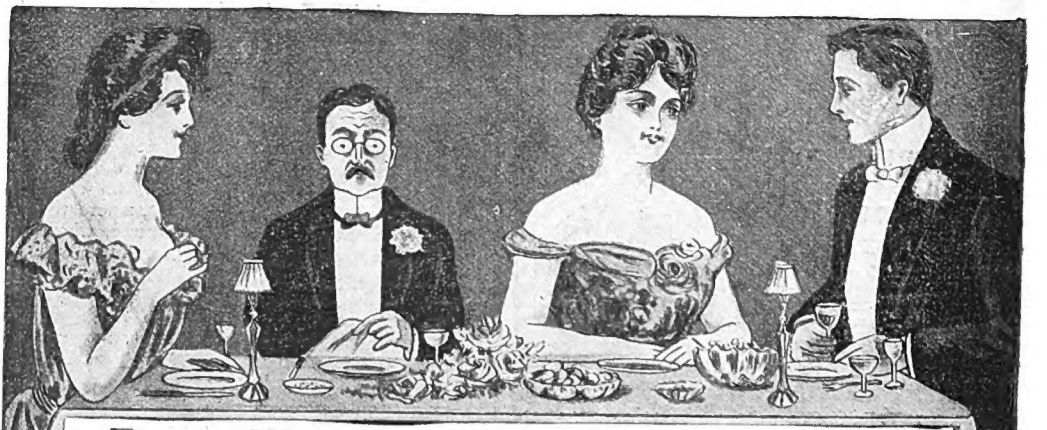

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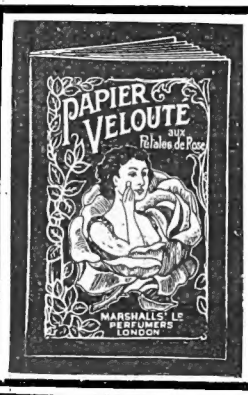

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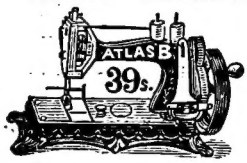

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5/6

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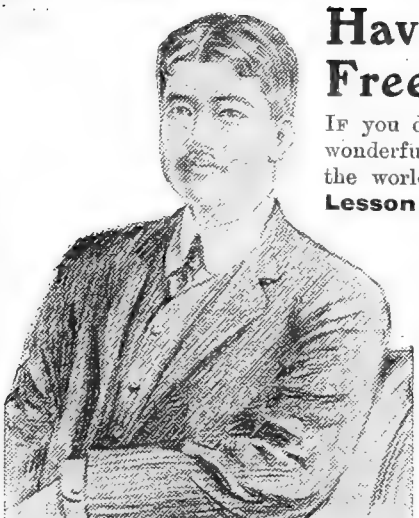

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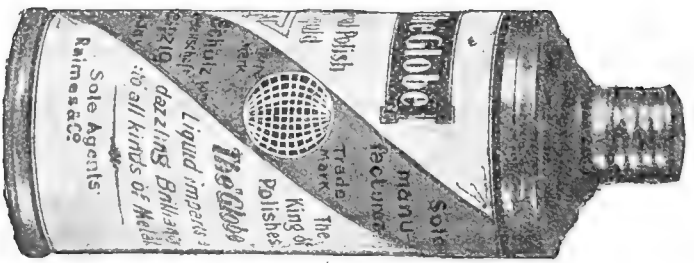

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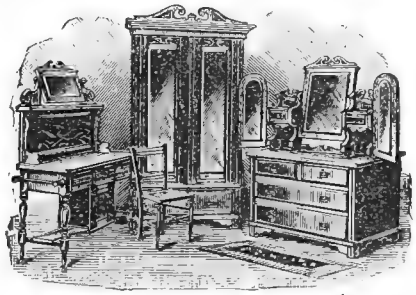

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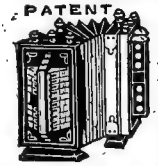

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Offers His Services Free To The Sick and Afflicted, Distance No Barrier.

For the past three years accounts have come from America of the most astonishing nature regarding marvellous cures that were being performed daily by the famous physician and scientist, Dr. James W. Kidd.

At first these stories were received with considerable doubt, but there continued to come reports of men and women being restored to health after years of suffering. Chronic and so-called incurable invalids were brought back to perfect health. There seemed no affliction or disease but what he might cure. Thousands of patients were treated by the doctor until his name and the fame of his marvellous remedies spread all over the civilised world. Investigation has proven every assertion made by Dr. Kidd. Some of the stories told and letters received from grateful patients seem to indicate that this man's remedies possess a mysterious power over disease. No matter how severe the case, how chronic, of how long standing, what other men have said or failed to do. These are the cases he especially solicits, because they give him a chance to prove his superior ability. When asked the secret of his success, the doctor modestly answers that it is partly due to the wonderful remedies which he uses, and partly to the careful attention given each case. He treats patients all over the civilised world by mail, and seems equally as successful as though they were present in his office. His greatest ambition is to give every sick, afflicted, and suffering man and woman in the world a chance to try his wonderful treatment.

In an interview recently the doctor said, "I believe that I have discovered a way to relieve most of the suffering from sickness and disease in the world, and I believe that it is my duty as far as possible to make this fact known to all. For this reason I am offering to send a free treatment to every applicant, rich and poor, no matter where they live, no matter what their disease. I am not a rich man, and cannot afford to always give my medicines away, but I am going to continue as long as possible or until every afflicted person has had a chance to try and satisfy themselves without expending one penny." Do you mean that you will send treatment absolutely free to every one who applies? was asked. "That is exactly what I mean. Any sick or afflicted person who will write to me and describe their condition may have a trial of this treatment entirely free. There are no conditions, no restriction. Distance is no barrier. I cure as readily thousands of miles away as in my office. A letter does just as well as a personal visit."

The above statement appeared in all the leading American papers and from there to the English Press. As a result Dr. Kidd's mail has been flooded with applications for free treatment. All have been answered promptly, but still they continue to come. For the benefit of his thousands of patients in the British Empire, the doctor has been compelled to establish an office in London. To secure a free treatment, it is only necessary to address Dr. James W. Kidd, 430 Saracen's Buildings, Snow Hill, London, E.C., being sure to describe your case. Remember that the doctor treats all diseases, from the simplest and easiest cured to the so-called incurable and chronic afflictions. There is no disease that he may not cure. In view of Dr. Kidd's marvellous success, his standing among America's most famous physicians, his reputation for honesty and integrity, this offer affords a remarkable opportunity to all who are sick and in need of medical help. It means a chance to get well. It means the opinion and advice of one of the world's most famous and successful physicians on your case absolutely free.

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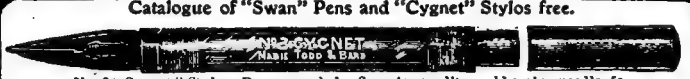
THE COLLECTOR
The HOUSEKEEPER.
A "Cygnet" Stylo
3/- and 5/-
A small sum well spent.

Catalogue of "Swan" Pens and "Cygnet" Stylos free.



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and wards off serious childish ailments; better than hurtful drugs or nauseous medicines.

A Nourishing Food as well as a Delightful Confection, made from fresh sterilized Devonshire Cream and the best Malted Cereals. It is easier to build up your children on a delicious food they relish than a medicine they loathe.

CREMALTO preserves them from **Colds, Lung Troubles,** and **Constipation.**

Price 1/- and 1/6 per Jar of all Chemists & Grocers.

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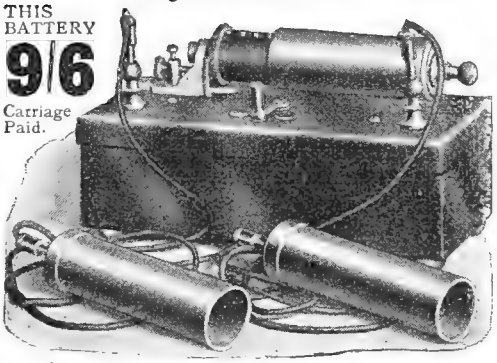

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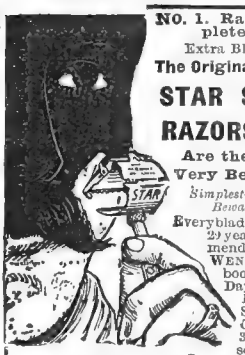

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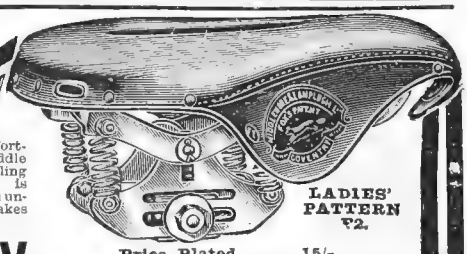
The Saddle makes all the difference!

A comfortable saddle makes cycling the pleasure it is intended to be—an uncomfortable saddle makes it a torture!



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Send Name and Address To-day and Get

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Dear Sirs,—Use my name in full anywhere you like. Your Foot Drafts have cured me, and I shall proclaim it to everyone suffering from Rheumatism. I shall be 82 in April, if spared.—Truly your servant,
JOHN CAIRNS.

Considering the age of Mr. Cairns, this is a very remarkable cure.

The enormous success of Magic Foot Drafts has so encouraged us that we will send every Rheumatic sufferer

4s. 6d. WORTH ABSOLUTELY FREE.

When we say FREE we mean it. You will never be asked to pay a penny for them. Just send name and address—no stamps—no money. Send now.—MAGIC FOOT DRAFT CO., 335 Victoria Chambers, Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.

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Do you know how to attract others? To succeed where others fail? To make yourself positive, strong and confident?

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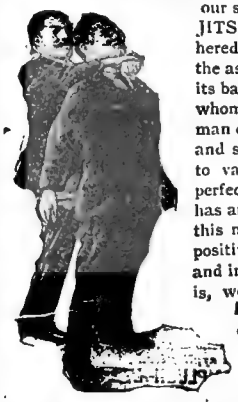

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For Liquozone—Yet We Give You a 2s./3d. Bottle Free.

We paid £20,000 for the British rights to Liquozone—the highest price ever paid for similiar rights on any scientific discovery. We did this after the product had been tested for five years, through physicians and hospitals, in several countries. It had been proved in thousands of the most difficult cases obtainable. It had cured every disease which had been considered incurable. We paid that price because, in germ diseases, Liquozone does what medicine cannot do.

Now, we ask you to try it—try it at our expense. Let us give you a bottle, to prove what it can do for you. A test is better than testimonials, better than arguments.

Not Medicine.

Liquozone is not made by compounding drugs, nor is there alcohol in it. Its virtues are derived solely from gas—largely oxygen gas—by a process requiring immense apparatus and 14 days' time. This process has, for more than 20 years, been the constant subject of scientific and chemical research.

The result is a liquid which does much of what oxygen does. It is food for the nerves and the blood—the most helpful thing in the world for you. Its effects are exhilarating, vitalising, purifying. Yet it is a germicide so certain that we publish on every bottle an offer of £250 for a disease germ that it cannot kill. The reason is that germs are vegetables; and Liquozone—the very life of an animal—is deadly to vegetal matter.

There lies the great value of Liquozone. It is the only way known to kill germs in the body without killing the tissues, too. Any drug that kills germs is a poison, and it cannot be taken internally. Medicine is almost helpless in any germ disease. That is why diseases which have resisted medicine for years yeild at once to Liquozone. And it cures diseases which medicine never cures. In germ diseases the results are almost inevitable.

Germ Diseases.

These are the known germ diseases. All that medicine can do for these troubles is to help Nature overcome the germs, and such results are indirect and uncertain. Liquozone attacks the germs, wherever they are. And when the germs which cause a disease are destroyed, the disease must end, and for ever. That is inevitable.

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Abscess—Anæmia	Kidney Diseases
Bronchitis	La Grippe
Blood Poison	Liver Troubles
Bright's Disease	Malaria—Neuralgia
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Coughs—Colds	Piles—Pneumonia
Consumption—Colic	Pleurisy—Quinsy
Constipation—Croup	Rheumatism
Catarrh—Cancer	Scrofula
Dysentery—Diarrhœa	Skin Diseases
Dandruff—Dropsy	Stomach Troubles
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All diseases that begin with fever—all inflammation—all catarrh—all contagious diseases—all the results of impure or poisoned blood.

In nervous debility Liquozone acts as a vitaliser, accomplishing what no drugs can do.

A 2/3 Bottle Free.

If you need Liquozone, and have never tried it, please send us this coupon. We will then post you an order on a local chemist for a 2/3 bottle, which he will give you, on our account, to try. This is our free gift, made to convince you; to show you what Liquozone is and what it can do. In justice to yourself, please accept it to-day, for it places you under no obligation whatever.

Liquozone costs 1/1½, 2/3, and 4/6.

CUT OUT THIS COUPON

for this offer may not appear again. Fill out the blanks and post it to the British Liquozone Co. Ltd., 60 Wilson Street, Finsbury Square, London, E.C.

Good only in United Kingdom.

My disease is.....

I have never tried Liquozone, but if you will supply me with a 2/3 bottle free I will take it.

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194 .....

Give full address—write plainly.

Any physician or hospital not yet using Liquozone will be gladly supplied for a test.

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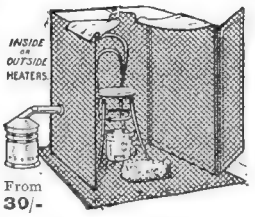
GOUT, and other troubles are aggravated by cold, damp weather because it closes the pores, stops the **Skin-breathing** (which is necessary to health), and drives back tear-and-wear impurities into the tissues and organs. The



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cleanses and vivifies the whole system, builds up health, & banishes disease.

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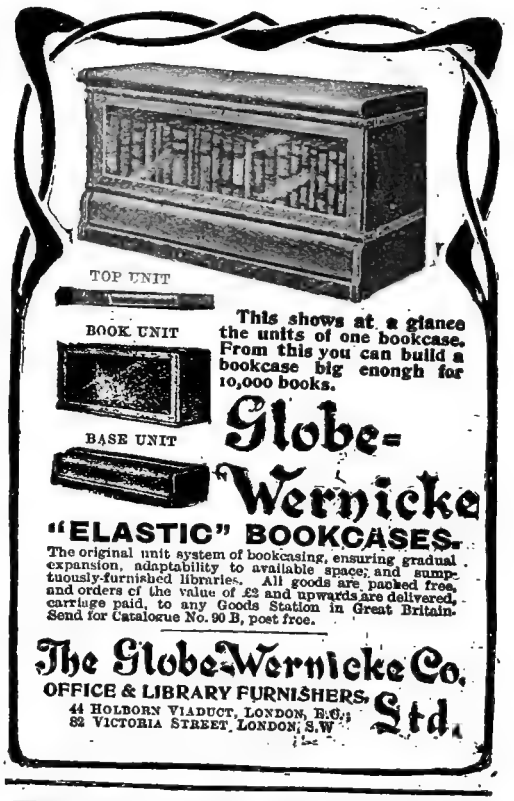

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THIS machine does work which will bear comparison with that of other machines costing higher prices. Entirely made of metal, with plated fittings, improved stitch regulator, etc. It works at great speed. It has no complications like the old-fashioned intricate machines, therefore no experience is required. It works fine and coarse materials equally as well.

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and SPOTS are cured by "Antexema."

We wish to urge on all readers of this paper the extreme importance of having a healthy skin. If the pores are clogged by some skin disease, ill-health is sure to result. Any dreadful irritation or disfigurement can be instantly cured by "Antexema," the well-known outward remedy for Eczema and all skin troubles of men, women, and children.

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Thousands of letters testifying to the value of "Antexema" can be seen at our offices. The one regret expressed by the writers is that they did not know of "Antexema" sooner.

Don't Delay. Get a Bottle To-day

"Antexema" will cure any skin complaint. Its benefits are immediately felt. Read the booklet "Skin Troubles"; copy enclosed with every bottle. "Antexema" is supplied by Chemists and Stores at 1/1½ and 2/9, or can be obtained direct post free in plain wrapper for 1/3. It should be in every home. Any sufferer not absolutely convinced of the value of "Antexema" should send a stamped envelope naming *Royal Magazine*, for a free trial, also a valuable Treatise on Skin Troubles and 200 testimonials from persons who have been cured. Address: **"Antexema," 83, Castle Rd., London, N.W**

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TEST IT FREE.

Don't delay, send a stamped envelope to-day, naming "ROYAL" to "Antexema," 83 Castle Road, London, N.W., for a free trial of "Antexema" also booklet on "Skin Troubles," and 200 testimonials from persons cured. "Antexema" at once stops all skin irritation, and is supplied by Chemists, etc., at 1/1½ and 2/9, or sent direct post free for 1/3.

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INSTANTLY BEAUTIFIES THE COMPLEXION

A brilliantly clear skin after two or three applications. Speedy disappearance of **Roughness, Greasiness, Pimples, Unnatural Whiteness, Redness, Freckles, Tan,** etc. Gentlemen find it cooling after shaving. Recommended for Red Noses. This excellent preparation **differs from all others.** In bottles, 1/-, 1/6, and 2/6. Postage, 3d. extra.

CRIMPOLINE Curls the hair Naturally in a FEW DAYS.

Will keep in curl always. Makes the hair soft and silky. **Produces the fashionable wave.** Neither sticky nor greasy. For Ladies', Gentlemen's, or Children's hair. For keeping the hair in curl **in a heated ballroom** it has no equal. 1/9 and 2/6 a bottle. Postage, 3d. extra.

Free with every order, a dainty booklet—"Beauty's Boudoir"—giving valuable toilet advice.

Your Chemist or Hairdresser will obtain Peralia or Crimpoline for you, or send direct to—

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If so, don't pay a fancy price at a local Shop. We can supply a 'COVENTRY EAGLE' (THE KING OF BABY CARS) direct from Factory and save you 7s. in the £. Prices from 30s., or 4s. Monthly. Send today for lovely Art Catalogue of 150 latest designs. All cars Carriage Paid, and on approval. Money back if not satisfied. Handsome and varied Gifts Free to all purchasers. **Coventry Eagle Carriage Co.,** Dept., 15, Coventry.

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Supply a single ring at wholesale price.

Diamond Cluster with Ruby Centre. £2 10 0.

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Pink Coral, 24/6. Real Opals, £2 2 0.

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One Diamond and Two Rubies, 27/6.

Real Stones.

Three Sapphires and Four Diamonds, £4 10.

TRY HINKSMANS ASTHMA REMEDY OF ALL CHEMISTS 1/-

There is no other way of proving the superiority and relief-giving power of **HINKSMAN'S ASTHMA RELIEVER** than by a personal trial. If this does not convince you, nothing we can say will do so. Hinksman's Asthma Reliever is wonderful in Asthma, Bronchitis Catarrh, and Whooping Cough. Gives instant relief. Lasting, of all Chemists, 1/-, or post free same price from

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Drink and Drug Habits cured at home in 3 to 7 weeks by the recognised TURVEY TREATMENT.

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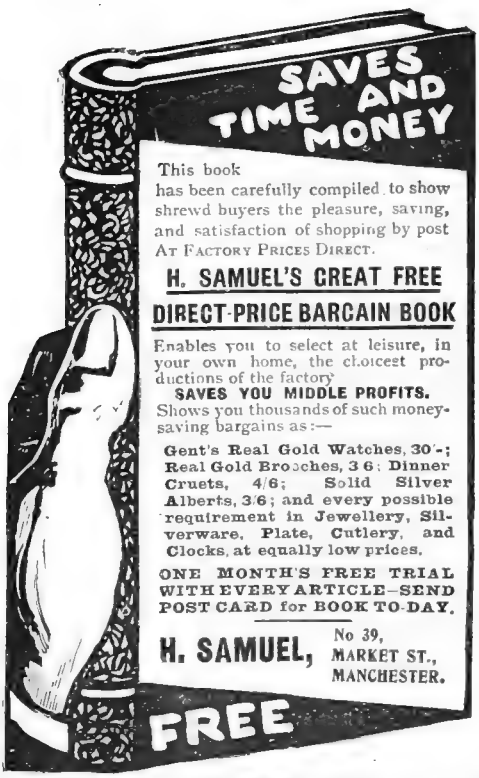

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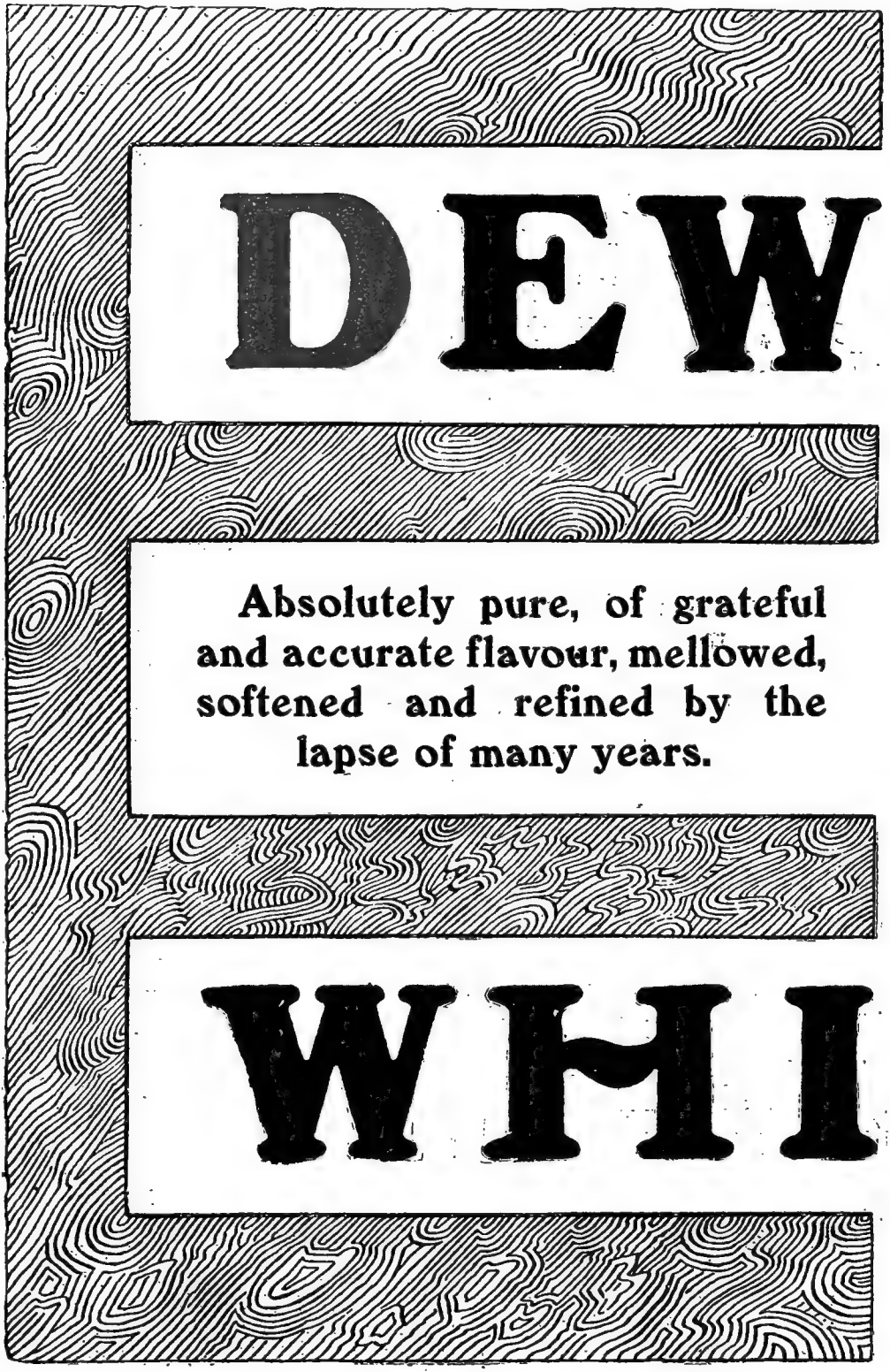
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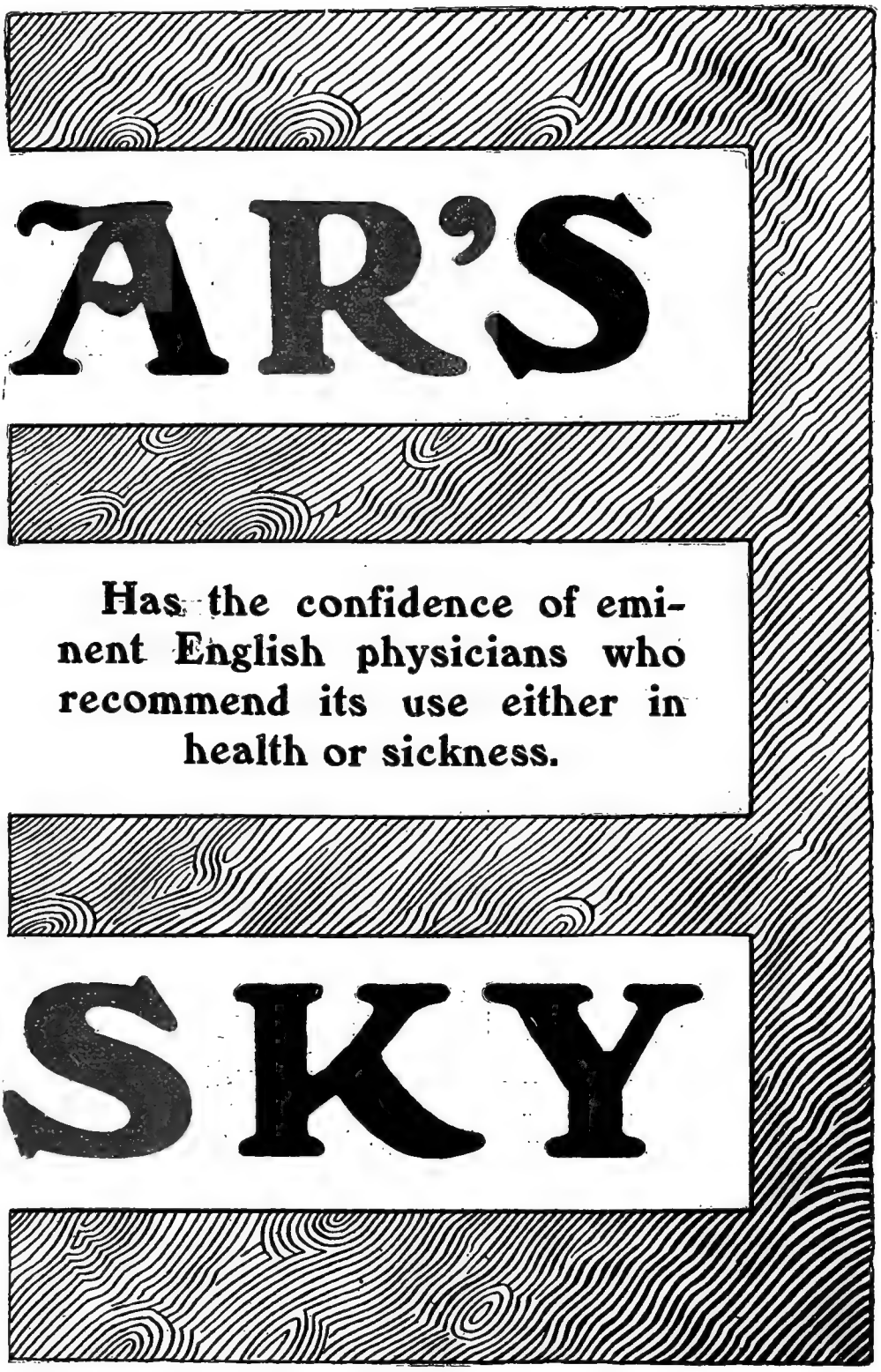

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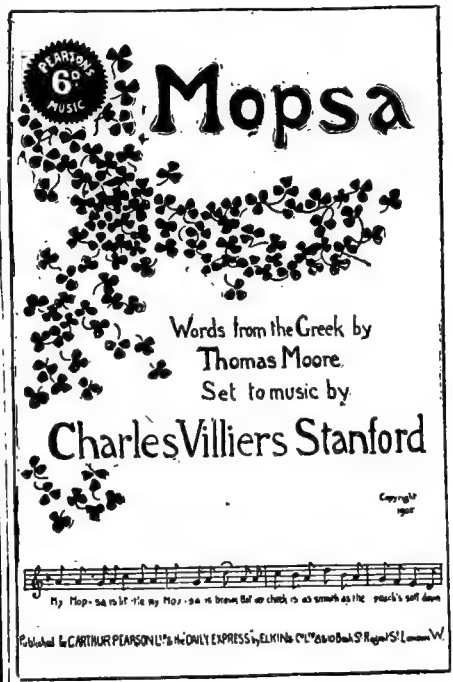

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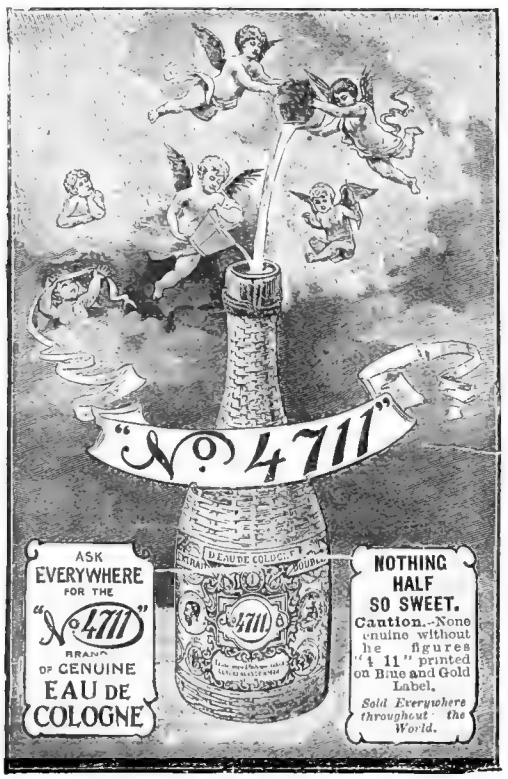
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PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

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CONTENTS FOR MARCH, 1905.

		PAGE
OUTSIDE COVER. Designed by T. Peddie.		
THE SISTERS. From the Painting by Jules Delaroche		*Frontispiece*
FROM THE STALLS Illustrated with Photographs.		403
CONFESSIONS OF CUPID. A Complete Story No. III.—Decima's White Hat. Illustrated by Walter E. Webster.	Gertie de S. Wentworth-James	411
SPOT OF TEXAS Illustrated by Harry Rowntree.	Earl Mayo	418
THE ROUTING OF THE COUNT. A Complete Story Illustrated by Tom Browne.	J. Philpot Witham	425
PICTURE PARAGRAPHS Illustrated with Photographs.		430
THE MYSTERY OF BARNSDALE MANOR. A Complete Story Illustrated by P. B. Hickling.	Baroness E. Orczy	433
MR. X—HIS PAGES		442
REAL LIFE ROMANCES Illustrated with Drawings.		444
MUSIC WITHOUT NOTES Illustrated with Drawings.	George Western	450
LADY TELLINGTON'S FUN. A Complete Story Illustrated by Walter E. Webster.	George Williams	453
THE PARK SEAT. A Poem	R. A. Hamblin	458
SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS No. II.—The Charge of the Light Brigade. Illustrated by Stanley Wood.	Walter Wood and Mr. H. Herbert	459
THE CARDINAL'S RING. A Complete Story Illustrated by J. J. Cameron.	J. K. Leys	468
A BACK YARD TRAGEDY. A Poem		473
THE WORLD THROUGH OTHER EYES No. XII.—The Steeplejack. Illustrated by Lawson Wood.	B. Wyand	474
THE GREATEST SAINT ON EARTH Illustrated with Photographs.	Stanley White	480
JEFFERSON'S HUMAN MOUSETRAP. A Complete Story Illustrated by Gordon Browne.	Guy Pocock	483
HIS LORDSHIP'S SEA DIP. A Complete Story Illustrated by J. R. Skelton.	Victor L. Whitechurch	487
CAP AND BELLS. Illustrated with Drawings		493
MR. EDITOR—HIS PAGE		496

The Editor will always be ready to consider contributions, whether literary or pictorial, and where stamps are inclosed will make every endeavour to insure their safe return in the event of their proving unsuitable, although he cannot hold himself responsible for any MSS. or drawings or photographs sent on approval.

Cases for Volumes I. to XII. of The Royal Magazine are now ready, and can be obtained at the Publishing Office, price 1/- each, or post free 1/2.

Bound Volumes III., IV., V., VI., VII., VIII., IX., X., XI., and XII. may also be had, price 4/- each, post free 4/6.

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Photo *H. Walter Barnett.*

"A Country Mouse."

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FROM · THE · STALLS

Photo GEORGE ROBEY. *Foulsham & Banfield.*

One of the most Popular Music Hall Comedians of the Day.

George Robey is a Cambridge man, and has played football for Millwall. He tells of a painful incident. ' One evening, not feeling very well, I arranged to sing one song instead of two, namely the second song. The band, however, struck up number one. I never noticed the change, and sang the first verse of number two. Audience a bit cold. Never mind, I thought, let's try verse two. But that didn't seem to go; and it wasn't until I had left the stage that I saw what I had done."

Google

Photo Campbell-Gray.

MISS CAMILLE CLIFFORD.

The "Gibson Girl" from America.

This young lady created the craze for the "Gibson Girl" in this country—the girl, as everybody knows, who walks and looks like a living image of one of those lovely girls drawn by Charles Dana Gibson. Miss Clifford was in the "Prince of Pilsen." She appeared once, walked half-a-dozen times round the stage, and made the success of the piece. She is a very clever girl with ideas, and has written in a contemporary a capital article on "How an Actress can Economise." All cooking is to be done at home, says Miss Clifford, and as much laundry as possible. Two girls should live together, and the result is as follows for each girl every week:—

	£	s.	d.
Breakfasts - -	0	5	3
Laundry - -	0	5	0
Luncheons - -	0	6	0
Rooms - - -	0	10	0
Dinners - - -	0	14	0
Extras - - -	0	5	0
Total - -	£2	5	3

This arrangement will leave a decent margin out of a small-part actress' income to be put by for a rainy day, of which there are so many on the stage.

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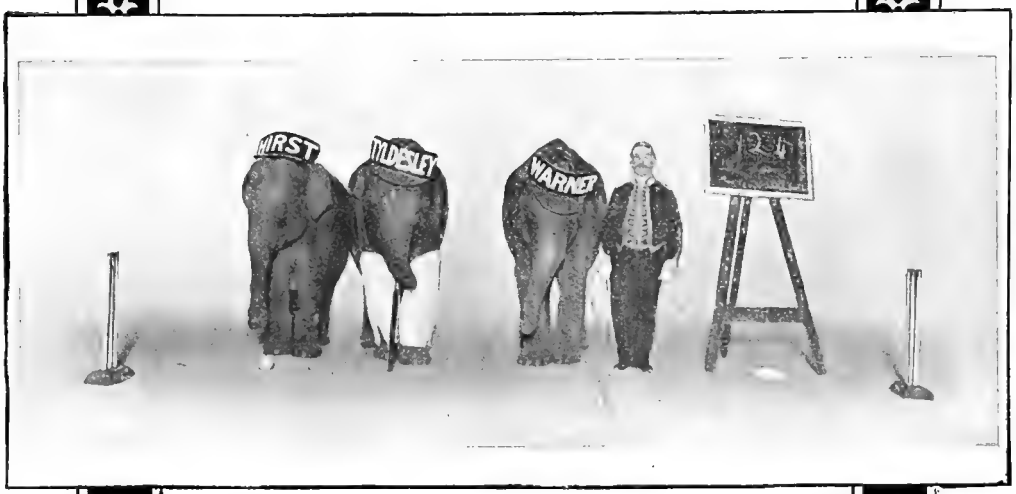

DE GRACIA'S ELEPHANTS.

Elephants Who Play Cricket.

"Two of my elephants are quick, and the third is slow, to learn," says Mr. de Gracia, of his pets. "They are like children, easily frightened, very nervous, but pacified by something nice to eat. Once they properly learn a trick they don't forget it in a hurry. But I have to be very patient with them, and it is slow work. You know, elephants' eyes magnify things immensely, and they are never afraid of anything their own size, but the little things trouble them.

"When the stables they live in have rats or mice, my elephants can't sleep, and we have to move. I feed them on bran mashes, hay, and bread, seven pounds a day each, and on Sunday I give them rice and sugar."

Mr. de Gracia's elephants are wonderful fellows, playing cricket, bowling and batting, shaving each other, and doing all sorts of tricks.

Photos *Campbell-Gray.*

Google

Photo *Window & Grove.*

LILY HANBURY.

A Beautiful Actress of Serio-Comedy.

Lily Hanbury has had many quaint experiences. She was playing in the Provinces once. Her part was that of a Roman matron; the scene, a splendid Roman Hall, with tesselated pavements and marble pillars, reaching high up into the carved and vaulted roof. Entering from the top of a flight of marble stairs, Lily Hanbury walked down with great dignity, and paused for effect at the bottom, leaning against one of the massive marble pillars. Alas! the marble pillar was but lath and plaster, and down it came, bearing with it another pillar and a mass of roof.

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Photo *Cavendish Morton.*

HARRY LAUDER.

The Screamingly Funny Scotch Comedian.

The "saftest of the family," was Harry Lauder's description of himself in one of his songs. But he has conquered London all the same, Scottish dialect and all, for a funnier comedian could not be found. Harry Lauder had a rough life, and by sheer hard work has got to the top of the "Variety" tree. He tells how, when a boy, he was employed in a colliery, working all day up to his waist in water, and then trudging seven miles or so to sing a comic song in a neighbouring village, all for seven and sixpence. But that was twenty years ago. Things are different now.

Photo *Ellis & Walery.*

GEORGE HERSEE. ⟶

The Clever Boy Actor.

Master George Hersee has had a stage experience of six years. He was the man who wrote to Queen Alexandra to thank Her Majesty for a present of sweets to the children who took part in a command performance at Windsor.

His stage career has been singularly fortunate, only two things marring the complete success of his earlier efforts. One was that in a fight he had on the stage, he got sadly damaged, owing to his opponent's enthusiasm for "scrapping"; and the other was that at one time he was strictly forbidden to talk to the green-room cat.

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ALICE COLEMAN.

A Beginner in the Ranks of Musical Comedy.

Alice Coleman is a young lady who made a modest start on the stage—a small part and an understudy—but means to get on.

In fact, so determined is she to get on that she quite conquers managerial doubts on the score of age and lack of experience; and so she is fast rising to a high position in the profession.

But then she deserves it; for what brighter young lady could you find anywhere?

Also she is a very sweet singer, and has a naturally charming manner on the stage that wins all hearts to her at once.

Photo *Ellis & Walery.*

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Photo *Lallie Charles.*

HAZEL THOMPSON.

A Young Actress in Light Comedy.

When plays are slack and something else must be done, Miss Hazel Thompson recites at concerts, and is a great success. As an elocutionist she is undoubtedly good. There is much serious work to be done on the stage, for acting must not be taken frivolously, if one is to get to the top of the tree. So Miss Hazel Thompson is making rapid headway, though she has been on the stage but a couple of years or so.

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Photo *Johnston & Hoffmann.*

DORIS & BLANCHE STOCKER.

Two Young Musical Comediennes.

Doris and Blanche Stocker were born in India, and lived there until they were old enough to be sent home, for all good Indian parents send their children home to be educated; and little Doris and Blanche were packed off to a boarding school, where they, no doubt, learnt a good deal, and, no doubt—who can tell?—were very naughty little girls. However, that's all over now, and they are on the stage, swimming in the turbulent ocean of musical comedy, where hard work and brains mean good parts and good salaries.

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The Confessions of Cupid

W. F. Webster

III.—DECIMA'S WHITE HAT.

The Third of a Series in which the Famous Little Matchmaker Tells of some of His Doings.

By Gertie de S. Wentworth-James.

I left the suburban social evening (where I had been very busy with the affairs of a young bank clerk and a local practitioner's pretty daughter) and flew westward.

After hovering about over the great houses of the great—the atmosphere of which usually stifles me—I paused before No. 12 Herkeley Square.

Evidently this was a night of revelry.

Red baize, striped awnings, and the swelling strains of the Green Bavarian Band all testified to the fact that Lady Dullminster was entertaining.

Ah! of course, this was the night of her great "Rose Ball," and Elam Marsh—the millionaire, on whom I had fixed my all-seeing eye for some time past—would be there.

Immediately I made up my mind.

Elam Marsh needed me without knowing it himself, and, if circumstances were propitious, I would go to his aid that very night.

A man still young, strong, and well-favoured, who knows of no romance outside the rise and fall of stocks and shares, and whose every hope and aspiration is dyed gold, *must* be rescued by a conscientious, hard-working little Cupid.

Deciding that I would do what I could for the empty-hearted millionaire, I flew along under the striped awning, through the great doorway, past battalions of powdered flunkeys, and up the magnificent marble staircase, which was festooned, hung, and almost buried in roses.

With a feeling of absolute inspiration thrilling through me, I flew into the ballroom, and, perching my small, invisible self on the back of a fat chaperon's chair, looked out for my latest victim.

The dancers drifted past—languid, bored, and *blasé* most of them—till at last I caught sight of my millionaire.

Yes, there he was, big, square, and powerful, with his firm mouth tightly closed, and

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that perpetual crease between his down-drawn brows—the result of much thinking, much reckoning, and much enterprise.

I wanted to get that crease away.

Elam Marsh was dancing just badly enough to be dignified and clever, without in the least degree interfering with the grace of his partner.

Ah, yes, his *partner*.

Who *was* his partner?

Why, Decima Deene, the daughter of a Naval officer, with a small bank balance and large list of distinguished ancestors.

Perching my small, invisible self on the back of a fat chaperon's chair, I looked out for my latest victim——

Suddenly I remembered that Decima had been my millionaire's principal partner at the big Hospital Ball at Mrs. Wellbread's little after-dinner "Hop," and at Lady Dorcas Ryder's coming-out dance; also, I had frequently seen them chatting together on the lawns at Ranelagh and Hurlingham, at various garden-parties, and on the Weere's houseboat.

Why not—er—why not——

Yes, why *not*?

The girl was lovely, and the simple short-waisted white satin gown, with the "Juliet" netted cap of seed pearls, suited her entirely.

She was very exquisite, and—she was laughing up into the eyes of the millionaire.

Leaving my post on the back of the fat chaperon's chair, I flew towards the centre of the room, and fluttered round them as they waltzed.

"Aren't you going to Nora Lancaster's wedding, then?" asked Decima.

"I'm afraid I shan't be able to get away. I've got a big meeting to attend in the City," replied Elam, nearly steering into a pillar.

"Oh!" (Was there a faint note of disappointment in that "Oh!"?)

"I may try to look in at the church for a minute or two as I pass, because there is always something about a wedding—the music and flowers and—and—solemnity of it all, I suppose—that appeals to me in a vague sort of way. Whether my emotions are those of pity, or of envy, I can't tell."

As the millionaire concluded his sentence he smiled into his partner's eyes, and the Naval officer's daughter — why, she *blushed!*

That blush finished my dalliance.

Quickly I whipped out two of the sharpest arrows, just newly-dipped in an extra strong solution of bitter-sweet poison, and, standing

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on a chandelier, waited until they passed my way.

Then I took aim.

"PING!" (the Naval officer's daughter was in love!)

"PING!" (the millionaire was in love!)

There was no doubt about the success of my latest assaults; those two tiny punctures (invisible to all eyes save those of the marksman) guaranteed the mutual heart-emotions of Elam Marsh and Decima Deene!

A moment later—just as the man of money had realised that the gold of one maiden's hair was brighter than all the newly-coined sovereigns in the Mint—the music stopped.

"Shall we go into the fernery at the other end? It is cooler there, and—more secluded."

In all his career, Elam Marsh had never been known to hesitate, defer, or falter, when once he had made up his mind.

Evidently he wasn't going to begin now.

"Yes. I—I—should like to look at the—the—aviary," replied Decima with a delicious first-season shyness.

But when they reached the dim, fragrant fernery, they didn't even *glance* at the birds—I, who followed them, can testify to this—because, right away, and without hesitation, the millionaire began the first chapter of his love-story.

"And—and—will you give me my answer?" he asked eagerly, when he had told her how deeply and absolutely he cared.

Now, Decima, though full of the prettiest originality and sincerity in every thought and action, was not entirely free from the world's foolish little pretences and conventions.

She loved him sweetly and staunchly (had she not cared ever since she first saw him rescue a drowning kitten at Boulter's Lock?) but she really mustn't appear to—to—"jump at" a millionaire.

—. . . . She was very exquisite, and—she was laughing up into the eyes of the millionaire.

If he were just an ordinary well-off suitor there would be no need for coyness or simulated indecision, but with a millionaire—oh! it would *never* do to make herself the least bit "cheap"!

"You—you—must give me a day to—to—decide," said Decima, trying to disguise her joy.

"Must I? I—I—revolt at waiting! I've never had to wait for anything," answered Elam Marsh almost sullenly.

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"I'll give you your answer at the wedding to-morrow."

"I told you that I should only just be able to look in at the church in passing. I can't possibly make time to stop and speak to you *then*, and—and—I *can't* wait longer than two o'clock for my answer!"

Decima paused, and the promise of those mischief-curves about her mouth was fulfilled.

She just remembered a very touching book she had read only a week before, in which the heroine gives the hero his answer by signal. It was such an original idea, and *so* romantic!

"Suppose," she said, still looking down, and twisting the fronds of a helpless fern round her slim gloved fingers, "I—I—make a sign at the wedding—if you care to look out for it? Then you'll know my answer directly you enter the church."

"What sort of sign?"

"Well, suppose" (she looked deliberately mischievous now) "that if I am wearing a *white* hat, you take it that my answer is 'NO,' but if I am wearing a *pink* hat, why—why—it is 'YES!'—I will go early, get a seat right under the first window on the left so that you can see me. Will that do?"

"It will *have* to do," answered Elam, with the powerless acquiescence which "weak" women can force upon "strong" men; "but—but for the sake of—of—everything, Heaven grant that you are wearing a *pink* hat at the Lancaster wedding to-morrow!" he concluded huskily and reverently.

An hour later the millionaire was missing from Lady Dullminster's ball-room (a privately-arranged midnight meeting of directors had called him away), while the girl who held the key of his earthly heaven sat at a small table, waiting for her partner, who had gone in search of a particular species of striped ice which the footman had failed to secure.

She didn't really want the ice—it was only a ruse to get the partner out of the way, so that she could have a moment for glad reflections.

"I *do* love him! Oh! I *do, do* love him!" she murmured beneath her breath. "And though my pink chiffon hat is vilely unbecoming, and doesn't accord one bit with my gown, how gladly, oh, *how* gladly, I'd put it on to-morrow! I am sure papa would have said that I did quite rightly not to give—er—Elam his answer right away, but it was terribly hard to——"

Her reflections came to a sudden halt as a gushing girl-friend paused by her chair and laid a suède-gloved hand on her shoulder.

"Oh! my dear! *I've* been watching you," she gurgled, "and I can't think *how* you can talk to that horrid millionaire man—Elam Marsh! Ugh!"

"I don't find Mr. Marsh in the least objectionable," replied Decima distantly.

"Don't you? Well, if you had heard Mr. Mosstein tell papa what *I* heard him tell, perhaps you wouldn't be so pleased to give him three dances running!"

"W— what do you mean, Mildred?"

"I mean that papa asked Mr. Mosstein how Elam Marsh made his money, and Mr. Mosstein said: 'Various specs of sorts—risky jobs—and then—it's not generally known—but he *deals in slaves!* He's been at it for some time. He keeps that, like all his other affairs, pretty dark, but a lot of people have begun to get wind of it. . . .' Now, my dear, what d'you think of that? . . . Ah! there's the music beginning—take my advice and don't give any more waltzes to the slave-dealer when he asks you. *I* wouldn't!"

When the moustached Guardsman returned with the striped ice, he found his partner white-faced, frightened eyed, and trembling.

"Captain Smart!" she cried in a low tremulous voice. "Can—can—you tell me, please, if it is true that—that—Mr. Elam Marsh *d—d—deals in slaves?*"

The Guardsman put down the ice and looked surprised.

"Yes, perfectly true," he replied, scattering the melting fluid over his polished pumps. "How did you know it, though? Marsh is such a beggar for keeping his business to himself. Oh, yes, he deals in slaves right enough, but, Miss Deene—aw—I say—aren't you well?"

But his question remained unswered, and the striped ice remained uneaten.

Without a word Decima had gone, and was making her way towards the cloak-room, leaving her partner under the impression that Captain Deene's daughter was slightly crazy.

Ten minutes later she was driving home in a hansom, sending a message to her chaperon that she wasn't feeling well, and had gone without disturbing her. (The chaperon, after the way of such-like dragons, was deep in the mysteries of supper at the time.)

Poor, poor little girl!

I had made yet another mistake!

How I yearned, as I sat unseen and intangible on the seat by her side, to be able to put my fat dimpled arm round her neck and comfort her.

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"A slave-dealer! A *slave-dealer!*" she moaned. "Oh, Elam, how could you! I love you, but—but it can never be! *Never!* A white woman cannot marry a man who trades in his fellow-creatures!"

When she reached home she paused outside her father's study.

The door was ajar, and the Captain had gone to bed.

Impulsively she entered the room.

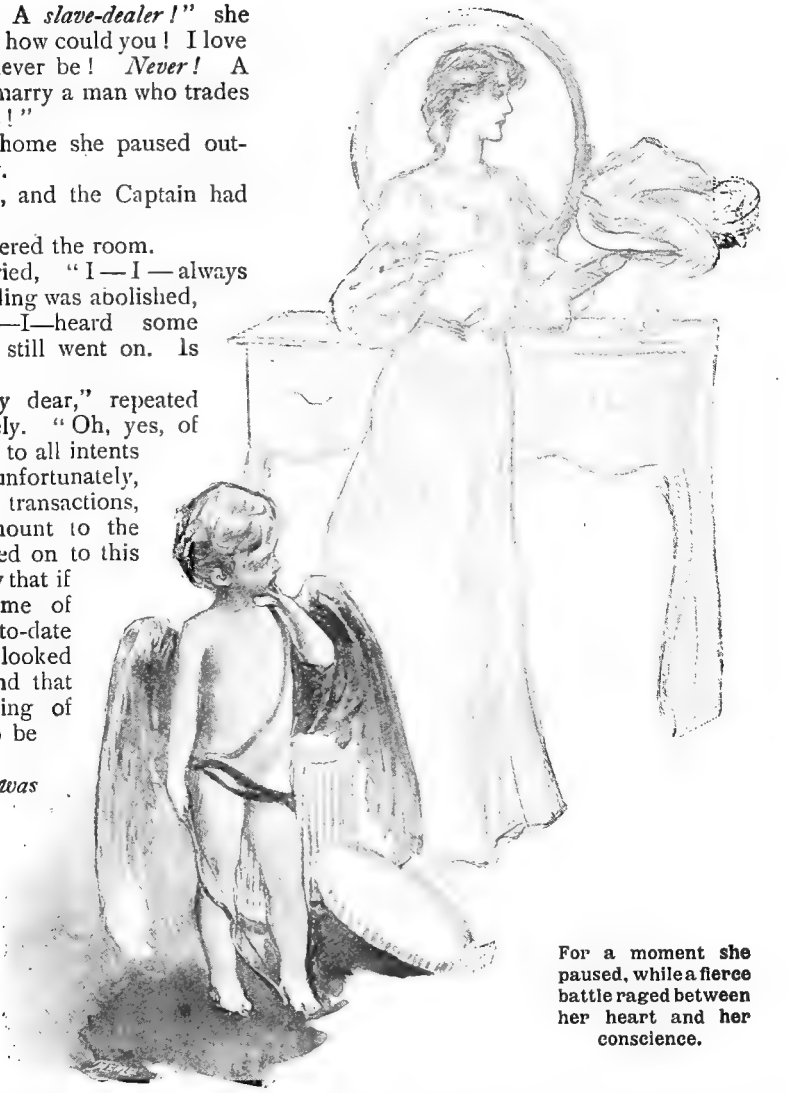
"Daddy," she cried, "I—I—always thought that slave-dealing was abolished, but—er—to-night I—I—heard some people saying that it still went on. Is it true?"

"Slave-dealing, my dear," repeated Captain Deene vaguely. "Oh, yes, of course, it's abolished to all intents and purposes, but, unfortunately, a certain number of transactions, which practically amount to the same thing, are carried on to this day. I'm sorry to say that if the sources of income of several of our up-to-date millionaires were looked into, it would be found that the buying and selling of human beings had to be reckoned with."

So it was true—*it was true!*

It must be the white hat and a life of heartache!

All through that night I, impotent and pitying, stayed by Decima's bedside, watching a young girl trying to quench the flame of her first love-light with tears. And when the morning came — the blazing morning of Nora Lancaster's wedding—it found her grave and resigned, determined to follow the rigid cold edicts of her white maiden conscience.



For a moment she paused, while a fierce battle raged between her heart and her conscience.

Such sin as Elam Marsh's could not enter into her life!

With chill, nerveless fingers she made her toilette for the function at which half Society would be present, hardly pausing before the glass in order to note the perfect picture—a wistful-faced girl with primrose-gold hair, clad in a soft white silk muslin gown.

Then she opened the hat-box.

Yes, there they were—the *pink* chiffon, and the *white* drawn-tulle hats!

Mechanically she lifted the rose-coloured creation and placed it on her head.

It wasn't particularly pretty or particularly becoming, but oh! how she longed to wear it!

For a moment she paused, while a fierce battle raged between her heart and her conscience.

At last conscience won: the pink hat was replaced in the box, and the white tulle millinery triumph was exalted to the summit of a lovely woman's head.

Decima Deene had voluntarily ended her own romance.

As she drove to the church with her mother she gazed out of the carriage window with aching, smarting eyes.

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It was such a golden, gorgeous day, and the glare and brilliancy of the gay summer weather hurt this girl, who felt that *her* time of roses was over.

The sunlight sickened her, the flowers sickened her, and as they entered the luxurious and fashionable church (my faithful little self flying in the rear) I knew that Decima Deene felt a stab of positive agony.

There is nothing like the hushed rustle of wedding excitement for hurting a woman who has elected to be lonely!

Making their way to the pew situated under the first window on the left, Decima and her mother took their seats while I hovered near them. (Oh! no, I wasn't required up at the altar—it was a fashionable Society wedding, you know!)

The sun blazed through the high stained-glass windows, sending great shafts of light across the building; the altar was white with lily-blossoms; beautiful women wore their bravest gowns, and the organ, suddenly ceasing to wander through by-ways of soft rambling sound, burst into the triumphant gladness of the "Lohengrin" bridal march.

It was a picturesque moment, and at that instant—before the bride appeared at the principal entrance—Elam Marsh came in at the side door closest to the pew where Decima was seated.

Immediately he glanced towards the white-hatted, white-gowned girl; then, without a second's delay, left the church unobtrusively as he had entered it.

The slave-dealing millionaire had evidently seen enough, poor fellow!

The white hat must have killed *his* summer day!

When the wedding and reception were both over, I felt inclined to leave Decima in order to see what I could do for the chief bridesmaid and best man; but a feeling of curiosity, mingled with commiseration, seemed to draw me towards the girl who had so faithfully served her conscience.

Therefore I decided to remain with her till the following morning, and watch how she bore her trouble.

For dinner that evening (the Deenes were dining alone) Decima wore a sad little black frock, above which her white throat, pale face, and primrose-gold head rose with pathetic prettiness.

"Decima must really have some new home dinner-gowns, John," said Mrs. Deene, addressing her husband.

"So she shall, my love, when I've made my fortune" replied Captain Deene cheerily.

"That's an affair of some delay, my dear," replied his wife in those ultra-ladylike accents which are the sharpest weapons of an irritating woman.

"Not so much, perhaps, Eleanor; not so much when my new 'spec' begins to bring forth its fruits."

"What is your new speculation?"

"Slaves, my dear. I'm going to deal in slaves!"

"*Slaves*, John!"

"Sl—slaves, Papa!" (Oh! was this hideous thing following her even into her home!)

"Yes, 'Slavonian Firsts'—mines, you know—commonly called 'Slaves' among speculators. Marsh put me up to the tip last night. He does big deals in them himself, but more or less on the quiet, because, directly he touches a stock, it's tantamount to booming it, so (not wanting to affect the market) he often buys 'Slaves' stock under an assumed name. It's decent of him to put me up to it—he usually keeps his transactions very much to himself; though, all the same, I believe that it's got afloat that he holds an immense quantity of 'Slavonian Firsts.'"

So this was the "slave-dealing" of Elam Marsh!

It was for the sake ot a large holding in mine shares that Decima Deene had worn a white hat, and spoilt her life!

* * * * *

When dinner was over I flew after Decima and followed her up to her little white and yellow boudoir on the first floor.

In a dull, apathetic sort of way she sank down on to a low chair, and, clasping her slender bare arms about her knees, gazed with a fixed stare of misery at nothing at all.

Poor Decima! It is such a hopeless sign when girls gaze at nothing at all.

"So I've done what can't be undone!" she muttered. "I could never recall him, and if I did, he would never come. Elam is not a man to make sport for the whims of a woman, and—and—if I once confessed that I believed him guilty of *slave-dealing*, he—he—oh! what an idiot I have been—a poor, credulous idiot!"

Yes, certainly it was a particularly tragic affair.

Just because of a stupid abbreviation of the name of certain gold mines near the equator, a *débutante* had lost the man she loved, and—of course, this side of the question doesn't appeal to me, but I speak with the sordid world—a millionaire into the bargain.

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However, to do Captain Deene's daughter justice, it was not the financial loss that troubled her or caused her to bury her pretty primrose-gold head in the cushions, and shed those bitter, quenchless tears, which I alone can cause to flow—it was the *man*, the man *she loved.*

Just as I had arrived at the conclusion that I couldn't do any good by remaining longer, and was packing up my quiver preparatory to going on elsewhere, the door softly opened.

Who was this intruding upon our privacy?

The heavy plush curtain swayed, waved, and then parted. Ah!——

Elam Marsh had entered the room—Elam Marsh not wearing the mournful air of a rejected suitor, but full of that triumphant assurance of one who has suddenly gained the right to be happy.

Decima lifted her head, and gazed at him with startled, tear-wet eyes, but before she could utter a word his arms were about her, and her lips were warm with the kisses of a millionaire. (Oh, yes, they are just like other kisses!)

I, perched on the vantage-ground of the piano, was mystified.

What did it all mean?

"Why are you crying, sweetheart?" murmured Elam fondly. "I—I am going to insist on thinking that they are happy tears, my darling—the only sort of tears which, please Heaven, you shall ever shed! . . . Oh, my Decima! my Decima! when I entered the church this morning, looked for your signal, and found you wearing a pink hat, I—usually the most self-contained of mortals—had to hurry away to keep myself from crying out for very gladness. Heaven bless that pink hat—my wife!"

And Decima, wise in her generation of girls, accepted the situation, the suitor, and her life's happiness, without asking any questions or making any awkward confessions—but all the same, she is convinced to this very day that her husband is colour-blind!

However, I—really a very far-seeing little god, despite my supposed impaired vision—discovered the solution to the mystery less than a week later, when I again had occasion to visit St. Mildred's Church.

As on the afternoon of Nora Lancaster's wedding, it was a blazing day, and the sun, shining in full mid-summer power through the stained glass windows, once more sent forth shafts of crimson, blue, and yellow light.

And there in the pew where Decima had sat was a little child holding a high bunch of arum lilies—not white, but PINK arum lilies!

Then I understood.

The sun, piercing through the crimson raiment of a pictured saint, had dyed the white hat pink, and thus Elam Marsh was given his answer!

I often wish I could tell the millionaire's wife that it is to a patch of coloured sunlight she owes her present complete happiness.

She thinks it's all my doing! Ha! Ha!

Reading the Thoughts of Kings.

Mr. Stuart Cumberland, the famous thought-reader—who has read the thoughts of at least a score of reigning monarchs, including King Edward himself, not to mention statesmen, generals, admirals, diplomats, and literary lights without number—is now contributing an intensely interesting series of Articles to the pages of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, describing his experiments and experiences with his royal and distinguished subjects. He has dealt in the January and February Numbers with his readings of the thoughts and characters of Kings, and in the March PEARSON'S—published March 1st—will give his impressions of many famous statesmen, including Gladstone, Cecil Rhodes, Li Hung Chang, and Mr. Chamberlain.

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The Life History of a Steer, from his Birth on an American Ranch to his Arrival in London.

By Earl Mayo.

There was really nothing exceptional about this particular steer. He was just the ordinary product of the cattle country—the wild longhorn blood of his plains, ancestry modified by a plentiful admixture of the civilised and aristocratic Hereford. He never rose to the dignity of possessing a Christian name, although we will call him "Spot," since it is convenient, and because his red coat was sprinkled with little splashes of white that made him conspicuous in any group of cattle.

He was simply one of the three hundred and fifty thousand of his kind that crossed the Atlantic last year on hoof or in refrigerators, to make brain and brawn for the work of the old world; and, though he was a great traveller, it is doubtful if he appreciated his advantages in this direction. Quite possibly he would have been as happy had his end come earlier, in some sanguinary conflict on the plains or in that vast live-stock wilderness in Chicago, a bourne from which so many of his fellows return in cold-storage.

Spot first opened his eyes among the scattered scrub that struggled for existence beside a dried-up stream in northern Texas, his mother standing over him, licking his wet coat and mooing softly. He was an ungainly object then, with legs that seemed too long for his body, and that sent him staggering in half-drunken fashion when he first essayed to move about on them. A little experience, however, soon taught him to control these unruly members, and at the end of his first forty-eight hours he followed his mother on to the wide plain, billowy as a summer ocean, and apparently as limitless, its surface unmarked by any moving object except knots of cattle here and there.

It was a pathless wild, but it proved a very pleasant home in which to spend an irresponsible calfhood. The warmth of growing Spring was in the air by day, and at night Spot lay down close beside his mother, her greater bulk protecting him from the chill winds that sometimes swept across the plain.

Underneath the dry, brown stalks of the preceding season's grass fresh shoots were springing up, and the older cattle knew exactly how to move the former aside with their muzzles so as to reach the succulent spears.

As for the calves, they had no care except to follow where their mothers led, to feed whenever the craving prompted them, and for the rest to indulge in lively cavortings, or contented naps all day long.

It was an untrammelled life that Spot led, during those early weeks of his existence. Of the great world beyond his unchanging horizon he knew nothing, nor did he dream that it held beings different from those he

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saw about him—the cattle drifting slowly across the plain, cropping the grass as they moved; the coyotes that sometimes slunk towards one of the young calves that had wandered away from the others at nightfall, only to scurry away in cowardly fashion when the enraged mother charged down upon them; the jack-rabbits hopping hither and thither.

Of course from the day of his birth he was property, but that he did not know. To all intents and purposes he was free, for the range stretched forth so vast that many a calf grew to be a full-fledged steer withour ever seeing the wire fence that marked the limits of his native ranch.

Spot's first knowledge that the range could be cruel as well as kind came on a March afternoon, when dark clouds banked up the northern sky, and out of them came a driving sleet and a wind that cut his tender hide like a knife. Moved by the instinct of self-preservation, which had served countless generations of unhoused ancestors, the cattle bunched close together, with heads held low, facing the storm, while the calves crowded in between, finding protection from the sleet in the bodies of the larger cattle, but so numbed by the cold that they had scarcely energy left to low piteously.

A Texas "norther" is a fearful thing for cattle, and whenever it sweeps down through the Panhandle country, it leaves a trail of carcasses behind, over which the coyotes quarrel, until a few whitening bones here and there remain as the only memento of its passage. All night long the herd stood facing the blast, until with the coming of morning every spear of grass was incased in ice, making it impossible to graze, while their own coats were covered with frozen sheathing, and many of the younger calves, frozen stiff, would never scamper over the plain again.

This fate had not been Spot's, but he was so stiff and cold that he felt he must lie down. As often as he did so his mother, usually so gentle with him, pricked him with her horns until he staggered to his feet once more. She kept him moving slowly but persistently, for she knew without any process of reasoning that the calf that lay down on that ice-clad ground would never rise again.

During all that day and the next night there was no grazing on the range, nor in all northern Texas, for the cattle country was an ice-bound country, and the cattle themselves were perishing by scores and hundreds. On the afternoon of the second day the "norther" ceased; the warm south breeze from the Gulf sprang up again, and in a few hours the storm was only a bitter memory.

Early in May, when Spot was nearly three months old, another experience, almost as unpleasant as the "norther," though of a very different kind, befel him. He was kicking up his heels close by the place where his

It was an untrammelled life that Spot led, during those early weeks of his existence.

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mother was feeding in a little depression of the far-spreading pasturage, when there was a thud, thud of hoof-beats on the hard ground above, and a man on horseback appeared at the head of the gully, waving his hat and shouting at them.

The calf did not know what to make of the strange object, and cowered in fear beside his mother, but she did not appear to mind the intruder. The experience of many seasons told her what was wanted, and she turned calmly back and moved slowly along ahead of the rider, who followed them until they had gained the open plain, and then turned away to search other gullies and hidden water-holes.

Out of crevices and from behind ridges other cattle began to appear, singly and in twos and threes, followed by other shouting horsemen. They all drifted slowly across the plain, never hurrying, sometimes stopping to crop a few mouthfuls of especially-tempting grass, but constantly converging towards the distant point where the white canvas top of the food-waggon marked the site of the day's rendezvous.

The cowboys kept the whole herd moving forward, riding behind them in a wide circle, until by noon all the cattle in this section of the range were gathered into one big, shifting group, kept together by the dozen mounted men who galloped round its outskirts.

The cause of this gathering of the denizens of the range was the Spring round-up, when the cattleman takes tally of the increase of his stock. To the older cows it was a familiar experience, for they had been through it many times, but to Spot and the other calves it was bewildering, and as they ran here and there in the crowd they were continually getting lost, and calling for their mothers to come and search them out.

They easily got lost. It is a familiar fact in the cattle country that while a calf will often mistake another cow for its mother, the cow never makes a mistake as to her offspring. In the old days of the open range, when half a dozen different brands were represented in a round-up, this rule was relied upon in determining the ownership of the young stock, and it was the recognised law that a calf belonged to the cow that claimed it.

As soon as the men had eaten their dinner and changed their mounts the real work of the round-up began. This was the range calf's introduction to the realities of life, and Spot was among the first to experience it.

The first intimation that he was about to receive special attention was when one of the cowboys rode towards the place where he was standing, near the outskirts of the mass of cattle. Spot looked upon this as merely a repetition of the annoyances to which he had been subjected during the morning, and dashed towards the thick of the herd, but wherever he turned the wiry little cow pony was close behind him. He wound in and out among the shifting cattle, now pressing close to his mother's side, and again squirming in between two strangers, but the persistent pony was always at his heels, and if he hesitated a moment a sharp nip on his back told him he was to move on.

Presently Spot made the mistake of trying to run for the open. No sooner was he beyond the crush of the herd than a rope flashed out from the hand of the man behind him; he felt it tighten around his hind legs at the next jump, and in another instant he had been jerked from his feet, and was being dragged across the rough ground at a rate that knocked all the wind out of him. His mother followed fast, protesting at the top of her voice against this treatment; but men on foot ran in front of her waving their big hats in her face, and driving her back to the herd.

Spot was dragged at the end of the rope a hundred yards or more to where half-a-dozen men stood waiting about a fire, in which long-handled irons glowed at white heat. One of the men seized him by the ears and sat on his head with a weight that made his eyes bulge; another, pressing his heavy boot against one hind foot, pushed it far forward, and seizing the other in his hand pulled it backward until the muscles of the side and flank were drawn taut. A third man quickly pressed two of the glowing irons, one after the other, upon his side, burning through hair and hide with the badge of the range, the mark of ownership which would never leave him, but would always reclaim him, no matter how far he might wander or be driven. A fourth man, who stood by with a small book in his hand, monotonously droned, "One bull-calf," and added a mark to the record on his tally-sheet.

The horrible burning sensation lasted only a moment, and almost before Spot realised what had happened he was dragged to his feet and driven back towards the herd where his mother waited to lick his wounds comfortingly.

The same process was repeated with the other calves one after another, while the rows of figures in the tallyman's book grew longer and the cloud of dust around the cattle became steadily thicker, until the branding

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was finished. Then blankets and branding-irons and cooking utensils were gathered up, and the cavalcade of cowboys moved away followed by the rattling food-waggon. The herd was left to scatter again to its grazing, and to occupy the range in quiet until the time of the Autumn round-up, five months or more later.

The next two years passed without particular incident in Spot's career. He roamed over the range at will, seeking out the best grasses under the old dried stalks, never straying too far from the water-holes, occasionally trying his strength against some belligerent member of the herd, or dashing in wild career across the plain with the other cattle in flight from some imaginary alarm.

A rope flashed out from the hand of the man behind

In spite of the hardship of occasional famine and cold, Spot grew rapidly in size and strength. His legs became strong until he was as fleet as a horse—after the fashion of the true Texas steer not fully transformed by the infusion of civilised blood. His frame was large, and though never fat, he had in him the making of a fine beef creature.

At the Spring and Autumn round-ups he was gathered in with the other cattle, but the men in charge paid no attention to him beyond a cursory glance and a brief comment on his promising appearance. Presently he was no longer greatly afraid of men on horseback, and had almost forgotten the time when he was branded. Yet the brand was still there, and its presence meant that in the course of time his existence would be forfeited to the cattle company's demand for dividends.

At the Spring round-up in his second year Spot, with a full thousand of his fellows, all young and well-conditioned steers, was separated from the main herd and started on his first long journey. They headed almost directly north and travelled steadily on day after day, snatching mouthfuls of grass as they moved, but always moving with the insistent bronchos and their riders close behind.

At night they lay down near some convenient water-hole, and there was always a chance for an hour or two of grazing before darkness settled down, and again in the morning before the day's journey began, but this was very different from the leisurely feeding to which they had been accustomed, and the cattle became lean and gaunt. Their surroundings were new and strange, and the

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range steer is always nervous in the presence of unfamiliar things.

Sometimes they would move about uneasily for two or three hours before settling down to rest at night, and at such times the cowboys kept a close watch over them, riding about the herd in a wide circle, and crooning a sort of long-drawn chant, a process known as "singing to the cattle," which usually had the effect of quieting them.

One night, however, when black clouds in the north-west brought on darkness earlier than usual, Spot found it impossible to settle down. Whether it was the thought of his Texas home or an unreasoning fear of the vivid flashes of lightning that occasionally cut the cloud-bank and lighted up the plain, he could not have told, but he began pacing about, sniffing at the earth, until his spirit of restlessness had communicated itself to the other cattle, and they all began circling round and round in aimless fashion. The foreman of the cowboys, who understood these symptoms, said to the men of the night watch before he turned in:

"You'll have to keep a sharp eye out to-night. The cattle are uneasy out there, and I'm afraid there'll be trouble before morning."

So the cowboys circled round and round the herd singing their wordless chant, until presently the movement among the cattle grew less and less, and some of them began to lie down. Spot was thinking of following their example, when suddenly out of the clouds that had mounted steadily higher and higher until the night was almost pitch-black came a terrific crash of thunder and a blinding flash of light, the forewarning of the storm.

Ordinarily Spot did not mind storms. He had passed through too many of them. But to-night, in his alarmed condition, this one thing was enough to overmaster him. Terror, the desire to escape from he knew not what, seized upon him, and with a startled bellow he dashed away into the darkness, while twice a thousand pairs of hoofs thundered after him through the darkness.

In vain the cowboys dashed for the van of the terror-stricken mass of cattle, discharging their pistols before the onrushing herd. With the impetus of a thousand maddened fellow-creatures behind him Spot could not have stopped or turned if he had willed, and he willed nothing. The spirit of flight, of his wild, free forefathers held him, and only exhaustion could master it.

On and on thundered the mad stampede, the fearless cowboys and their plucky ponies keeping pace with the rushing cattle in the darkness, where a false step or a treacherous prairie-dog hole meant that they would be trampled to death in an instant.

In a half-hour they had covered more ground than in a day's ordinary journey. Then suddenly another flash of lightning revealed to Spot and to the others in the forefront the fact that just before them was a steep embankment. It was too late to stop or swerve. With one tremendous leap Spot launched himself over the edge, unknowing what was before him. By good fortune he landed on firm ground on the other side, but some of those behind were not so fortunate, and went tumbling down among the rocks and bushes of the ravine, where they lay with broken legs, or were trampled upon by the herd behind until the little gulch held half a hundred dead, or maimed cattle.

Some of the cowboys had fared ill, being thrown in attempting to clear the gulch, and one poor fellow with his pony was stamped out of all recognition by the flying hoofs. But this ended the stampede. Before Spot could renew his flight the cowboys were before him, shouting and shooting into the air and barring his progress. The few steers that rushed past on one side or the other, finding themselves unaccompanied, soon stopped and lay down to rest.

A day was occupied in gathering in the strays, and then the cavalcade went forward again. The journey ended a fortnight later among the rolling Wyoming hills, where Spot soon found that the buffalo grass growing in detached tufts was stronger, higher, and more succulent than any he had cropped before.

Upon this fine food he grew with astonishing rapidity, and by the time late Autumn arrived he had acquired the size and weight of many a four-year-old. Still he was not fat, though he carried a good supply of solid flesh and muscle.

His new owners had not perhaps expected to part with him so soon; but he was a fine young steer, the corn crop was a heavy one, and the Chicago quotations for beef were running higher than they had for many years. These circumstances worked together to change the ownership of Spot once more.

He was bundled into a stock car, packed with so many of his fellows that he had scarce room to turn his head, and was carried eastward nearly three hundred miles to be put down on the premises of a Nebraska "feed-lot" owner, where he entered upon a life of ease such as he never before had experienced.

The feed-lot owner is a new factor in the

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cattle business, a development of the past decade. Formerly, cattle went direct from the range to the market, big of frame, but meagre of flesh. Now the feed-lot man takes them in hand and makes them successful candidates for the rating of "prime," instead of "common" or "poor," as they would be classed except for his attentions.

He depends not at all upon grass. Corn and hay and plenty of them are his staples, and he has reduced his system to an art so exact that he can take a range steer and add to him now a streak of fat and now a streak of lean, in a manner that would have been entirely acceptable to Jack Spratt and his wife of blessed childhood's memory.

Under these new conditions, Spot grew big and sleek and positively lazy. He had been accustomed to browse all day, in order to satisfy his appetite. He had been compelled to travel long distances to obtain water. When storms came, there had been no choice but to face them with the scant protection obtained by huddling together with the other cattle.

Now all this was changed. His food—fragrant hay, and fine, long cornstalks with golden ears—was placed before him, and he had only the exertion of eating it.

Near the centre of the home was a broad pond of clear water, which was kept full by a windmill. There were comfortable sheds to lie under when snow fell on cold nights.

Under this excellent treatment Spot was not long in taking on a good twenty stone, until, before the supply of corn was exhausted, he stood a one-hundred-stone steer, with well-rounded body, and a smooth, sleek coat, quite different from the rough jacket that he wore in his range days. Now he was a creature to appeal to a connoisseur of beef cattle, and so it happened that when a buyer from a near-by city drove out to the feed-lot owner's establishment one day Spot was among the steers that he selected.

Again there was the cattle car, with its cramped space—one of a long train of fifty. But Spot was worldly-wise now. He was no longer afraid of men or horses, or railway

In vain the cowboys dashed for the van of the terror-stricken mass of cattle, discharging their pistols before the onrushing herd.

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trains, or many of the things that once frightened him. He took the trip stoically.

Once every day the steers were let out to feed and drink and stretch their legs, and then they travelled on again. At length, one morning, the jolting of the train was replaced by a gentler motion. Instead of the roar of the locomotive ahead, a tug was puffing alongside. The cars had been run upon a big float, and were crossing the North River in New York Harbour towards a long pier, beside which lay a giant ocean liner.

If Spot's literary education had not been neglected he might have spelt the big white letters on her side into the name *Minnetonka*, and might have guessed that he was to become a passenger on board her. But perhaps it was as well that he did not know that last year this same ship and her sisters of the Atlantic Transport Line carried to England forty thousand of his kind, while the White Star steamers, a little further up the harbour front, carried out an almost equal number, or that all these went to satisfy the Briton's fondness for the roast beef that has made his country great.

After he had been carefully examined by a government inspector, and found to be in perfect condition, Spot with his fellows was driven up a narrow gangway to the deck of the ship, where he found quarters that were positively luxurious compared with those he had occupied on his railway trips. There was plenty of room here, and the clean, white-washed partitions stretched away as far as he could see. There were cattle above, below, and on every side of him—nearly a thousand in all.

The cattle were all tied so that they could not move about much, but their heads were free, and there was no jolting or jarring or crowding, but only the imperceptible onward movement of the great steamship. Three times a day the men who took care of the cattle fed them on corn and shook down a plentiful supply of hay before them.

Indeed, all were looked after nearly as watchfully as the human passengers on the upper deck, for each one represented twenty pounds at the prevailing prices, and they were too valuable to be allowed to deteriorate through neglect.

After nine days of this travel the *Minnetonka* entered Tilbury Docks, the cattle were transferred—once more to a float—and went upon the Thames to London.

Here, at the City's live-stock metropolis, Deptford Market, let us leave our friend Spot. We have accompanied him across a continent and an ocean since he left his early home, but further we shall not go. The subject is too painful.

The British law says that no foreign beef shall leave Deptford alive. And Spot's time of grace is short, for the same law provides that all cattle must be killed within ten days after landing. He will therefore be carefully inspected once more, this time by representatives both of Uncle Sam and of John Bull, and after he receives their good-health certificates the Deptford butchers will claim him.

A week or a fortnight after his arrival we may meet Spot again, and dine, not with him, but upon him. At the same time, at a hundred other tables in London, the steer that was raised in Texas, fattened in Nebraska, and killed at Deptford, is helping to make the dinner successful.

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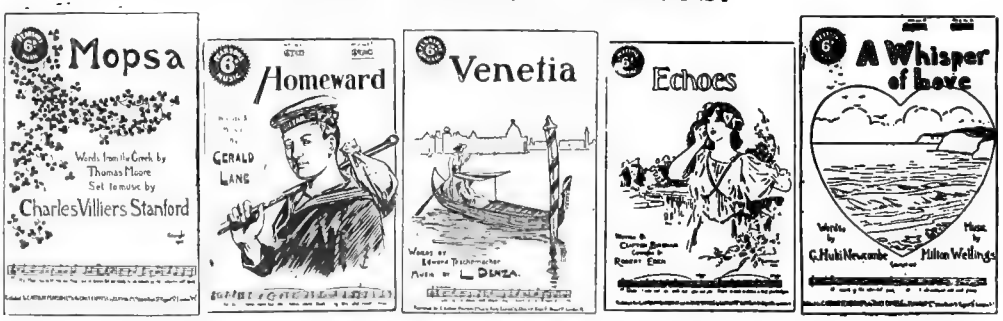
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THE ROUTING OF THE COUNT

By J. PHILPOT WITHAM.

A Plot that nearly Proved a Fiasco.

I.

DICK CARTWRIGHT strode into the cosy library at Headon Court, and, throwing himself into an arm-chair, indulged in a moody reverie; and it was not until his sister had repeated her question that he became aware of her presence.

"Matter?" he answered gloomily. "Oh! nothing much, Nell. Only this: I have just proposed to Marion—and she has refused me! Began to talk about 'affinity of souls,' and all that rot! Pshaw! And she used to ride as straight to hounds as any man in the field!"

"Refused you!" (blankly). "Why, I thought—— It's that wretched Count," she continued disgustedly. "Since he poked his very undesirable self into Burnlea, Marion has seemed bewitched. She hasn't hunted once for the last month, I know; and the way she everlastingly sits mooning about with a book of poetry in her hand is simply sickening! She isn't the same girl—I should like to shake her," with a stamp.

"Yes, the Count's making the running now," said Dick. "Browning and Guidel's poems—or no doubt the Count's should be placed first—appear to take up all her time. And now it's amateur theatricals! Pshaw!"

His sister was thoughtful for a moment. A "lovely idea," as she afterwards termed it, had occurred to her—a scheme to send the Count packing and restore Dick to favour once more.

"Why don't *you* go in for amateur theatricals—just for once?" she asked.

Dick looked at the speaker as if doubting her sanity.

"Yes, I mean it! I think I see a glorious way for you to straighten things out."

And settling herself comfortably in her chair she proceeded to unfold her plan.

"You know, Dick, I am going to the amateur theatricals this evening with Marion and the others;

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so, at the close, as the evenings now are just lovely, I shall suggest that the oldsters drive on, while we juveniles—that includes his Countship, although he's forty if he's a day, and I'm sure wears a wig—walk home in the moonlight.

"Marion, the Count, and I must dawdle behind, so that when we reach the avenue leading to the Beeches the others will be out of sight. Then, as we are walking up the drive—say where the old twisted holly is, it will be darkest at that spot—a tramp will step out and demand money and threaten the Count if he doesn't hand some over.

"That's my plan!" This gleefully.

"Think what a figure he will cut, Dick! I feel convinced he is a coward, in spite of all his brag about big game shooting in Central Africa; and if Marion were only to see him in his true colours, I know she would be disgusted with him.

"Dick!" (breathlessly). "Don't you think *you* could be a tramp for once? A false beard, a battered hat, and some ragged clothes, and there you are! What do you think of my scheme?"

"Sounds feasible, old girl." Then doubtfully, "I suppose it's fair enough? It doesn't seem—er—quite the thing, though, does it?"

"Oh, nonsense! The Count's bigger than you, and after all his 'tall' talk, if he can't manage to play the man when threatened by a tramp, the sooner Marion is disillusioned the better.

"Of course, you mustn't hurt him" (with a consideration which was truly Christian). "The conceited wretch actually had the impudence to try to flirt with me the other evening; but I shouldn't like you to hit him. Only make him *grovel*—that's all."

"I will!" said Dick with unction.

* * * * *

But perhaps we had better let the originator of the plot tell the remainder of the story in her own words.

II.

We all started for the Assembly Rooms together, Dick at the last moment excusing himself on some pretext or other.

Marion, I thought, looked after him rather wistfully; but the Count at that moment came up, all smiles and bows, and she went off with him. I felt I could have shaken her.

Count Francisque Guidel was in fine form in the masked ball, and the whole affair was a great success; but, of course, I was glad when it was over, and anxious for the real fun—*our* fun—to begin. Guidel, I could see, was higher in favour than ever; and I joyfully hugged myself at the thought of his coming downfall.

It was not hard to manage that we three should lag behind on the way home. One had only to call the Count's attention to the scenery to have him stop and give a rapturous dissertation on it, with quotations from the works of every known (or unknown) poet, dead or living, invariably including—in the latter category, unfortunately — those of Francisque Guidel.

Consequently, by the time we reached the avenue, we had the road entirely to ourselves; and as we neared the holly bush, I dropped a pace behind the others.

The Count should get the full benefit of the surprise we had prepared for him, I thought with a smile, as a slight crackle warned me that Dick was at his post.

Naturally, when he suddenly sprang out and stood before us, I was prepared.

Not so the others—although Marion, I must admit, was not daunted.

Drawing herself up, she stared unflinchingly at the tattered figure and bearded face of the "tramp" confronting her; while, with a stammer, the Count broke off in the lines he was quoting, and looked doubtfully at the intruder.

"Ve—ell, my goot man?" he said.

"You can spare a trifle, sir, for a poor man," said the disguised Dick truculently.

"No," broke in Marion firmly. "Don't encourage the lazy fellow, Count. Come, let us pass, my man."

But the tramp made a threatening gesture and came a step closer.

"Just a seexpence," faltered Guidel, avoiding Marion's eye. "Ze poor man looks—er—er—hoongry."

How I laughed to myself! (The laugh was still in our favour. I didn't know what was coming!) Dick hungry! *Angry*, if you like!

"*Sixpence!*" echoed my brother scornfully. "Look 'ere, guv'nor—make it a suvren."

("Good old Dick!" I murmured to myself. "Not half bad for a first attempt.")

The Count slipped his hand nervously into his pocket, and I remarked with glee the curl of Marion's lip as she noticed his action.

Stepping up to him, she whispered something into his ear; and, retreating a pace, Guidel at once put his hand into the inside pocket of his coat, drew out something which

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"Move anozaire step at your per-r-ril," he said triumphantly.

glinted in the moonlight, and—pointed it at Dick.

"Move anozaire step at your per-r-ril," he said triumphantly. And I saw with horror that he was *covering the tramp with a pistol!*

To say that Dick was astonished is to put it mildly. Our cherished plot had certainly gone wrong. A pistol as a possible factor in it had not entered our calculations.

I guessed at once what Marion had whispered to that wretched Count. She, with her quick wit, had remembered the pistol he had used that evening in his character of Lieut. Cipriani, and which he had placed in his pocket when leaving the Rooms; and now Guidel was holding Dick at bay with—*an empty pistol!*

But how should my brother know it was not loaded?

All that passed through Dick's mind I shall never know. Judging from his face—or as much of it as the beard permitted me to see—his thoughts were of a rather vivid nature. At that point-blank range it would have been nothing but suicide for him to attempt to rush his opponent — had the pistol been loaded!

I could have cried at my inability to help Dick, and racked my brains for a means to let him know that the weapon was harmless. But at all costs I must guard against his identity becoming known. For the tale to get abroad would be unthinkable.

How bitterly I reproached myself for being the means of his getting into such a predicament!

"Tu-urn r-r-round, and mar-r-ch on," said the Count, with a military air.

There seemed nothing else for it, so on Dick walked, while we followed after, Guidel in fine feather.

My tongue itched to call out, "It isn't loaded!" as I saw my brother walking on ahead. But what would my companions think if I did so? Surely, I argued, Dick would make a dash soon, and escape before we got home.

This, he told me later, was what he intended to do.

But Dame Fortune willed it otherwise. The goddess must have been in a particularly

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sportive mood that evening, and had yet another surprise in store for us.

We were now about a couple of hundred yards from the house, which lay hidden behind a bend in the drive.

Suddenly, a terrible uproar reached our ears—the loud baying of a hound, mingled with the shouts of men and the terrified shrieks of women; and there, flashing round the curve ahead of us, and looking twice his size to our startled eyes, raced a huge monster, with fangs gleaming in the moonlight, and dragging a massive chain behind it!

We all stopped with remarkable unanimity.

"Merciful Heaven!" cried Marion, turning pale, "it's Nero! He's broken loose!"

I confess I felt like fainting. My heart seemed almost to stop beating. As for the Count, I thought he would have dropped.

Nero, the Colonel's savage boar-hound—an animal as big as a calf, and which only his master was able to control—had indeed broken the chain by which he was always fastened and was making straight for us.

"S-stay vare you are!" shrieked Guidel, in a quavering voice, pointing his pistol at Dick, and determined at any cost to keep someone between him and the snarling fury which was charging down the drive. "Stay vare you are—or I veel shoot!"

"Don't be a fool, man," shouted Dick, springing aside, his assumed character forgotten in the excitement of the moment. "Pull yourself together. Wait till he gets closer, and then—*Shoot!* Say at ten yards. You can't miss him!"

"I—I—can't," wailed the unhappy Count. "It—it—ees not loaded."

And dropping the useless weapon—for moral intimidation is not of much use with a savage boar-hound—he looked wildly round for a means of escape.

There was a young larch close at hand. The Count reached it in record time, and shinned up its slender stem with an agility which surprised us, and probably himself.

I caught Dick's glance at that moment.

"*Unloaded!*" he cried savagely, as a full appreciation of the ridiculous figure he had cut during the last few minutes broke upon him—"Unloaded! by Heaven!"

It was lucky for the Count that his erstwhile victim had something else to occupy his attention. There was a look in Dick's eye that boded ill for Guidel.

But Dick had no time to spare for him—at present.

With great bounds the savage animal rapidly neared us, and, with a horrible snarling sound, jumped straight at Dick's throat.

I shut my eyes for a moment and shuddered.

There was a thud, and man and dog fell in a heap—Dick with his hands tightly gripping its throat, while he avoided the vicious snapping of its powerful jaws.

I was absolutely too frightened to move, and stood as if petrified.

As for Marion, the moment of danger seemed to awaken the old practical spirit in her, and, darting forward, she seized the animal's hind legs and tried to secure them.

Backwards and still farther back Dick forced its head, and maintained his grip on the massive throat, till its struggles grew feebler, and at length, with lolling tongue and bulging eyes, it lay quiet.

"Scotched, not killed," he panted, rising to his feet and taking hold of the remains of the chain.

His battered hat and false beard had been lost in the struggle, and Marion started as she recognised him.

"We must tie him up," he said, looking round.

His glance fell on the larch, and travelled upwards until it encountered the figure of Guidel silhouetted against the stars.

"Ah!" he muttered grimly, "this will do, I think."

"No! Not there!" cried Marion, haltingly. "The Count——"

But Dick was adamant. I guessed the pistol incident was rankling in his breast, and that he saw a chance of turning the tables.

"Yes; here!" he returned, with decision.

"Oh! for mercy's sake, *don't*," wailed the poet in agonised accents, when he understood what was intended.

But, dragging the now reviving animal towards the tree, Dick passed the chain round the stem, made it fast, and jumped back.

And not a moment too soon.

With a convulsive gasp the great dog sat up and glared at his adversary. He shook himself, and then, with a low growl, sprang forward—only to be brought up by the chain with a jar that nearly choked him, and, incidentally, almost shook the Count from his perch.

"Come," said Dick, offering Marion his arm, "let me take you home."

I discreetly fell in behind, and we walked on towards the house.

"What does all this mean, Dick?" she

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asked, touching his decidedly-the-worst-for-wear jacket.

"Oh, amateur theatricals seem all the go now. I thought I'd have a turn."

This was not bad for Dick. Repartee is not his strong point.

Marion blushed, but rallied quickly.

"And what part have you been playing?" she asked slily.

This was a poser.

"H'm," said Dick, with a burst of candour, "it looks very much as if I've been playing the fool."

"Never mind," she returned, her eyes shining, "you certainly played the hero in the end—Dick."

They were silent for a little while.

Then: "Dick," I heard her say very softly, "I believe I'm tired of amateur theatricals and—and—things."

His arm slipped round her waist, and I knew that it was all right again between them.

* * * * *

But all this time Guidel was up the tree. Colonel Travers, as it happened, had been suddenly called up to town, and as no one else cared to tackle the dog (for Dick had made a hurried exit to change into respectable clothes once more before he should be recognised), it looked very much as if the unfortunate Count would have to remain where he was.

The difficulty was, however, solved by the gardener, who brought a long ladder, and down we all trooped to set the poet free.

We found the Count clinging desperately to the slender trunk of the larch, feebly uttering "*Mon Dieux*" and gently swaying to and fro in the breeze. The dog was taking a great interest in his every movement, and was licking his lips apparently in anticipation of the time when his prey should drop, a consummation which Guidel was, we gathered, doing all in his power to avert. The ladder was placed in a slanting position against the tree, with its foot well away from the trunk, and amid the eloquent silence of the whole house-party the Count very gingerly descended.

He walked hurriedly down the drive, and Burnlea saw him no more.

The proprietor of the Royal Hotel was the only person who seemed anxious to meet him again, and he after a short time crossed the sum of £15 10s. off his books as a bad debt.

And so the episode ended.

With great bounds the savage animal . . . . jumped straight at Dick's throat.

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PICTURE PARAGRAPHS.

For this Feature, Photographs of Queer and Uncommon Objects will always be Gladly Considered.

A BIRD 12FT. HIGH.

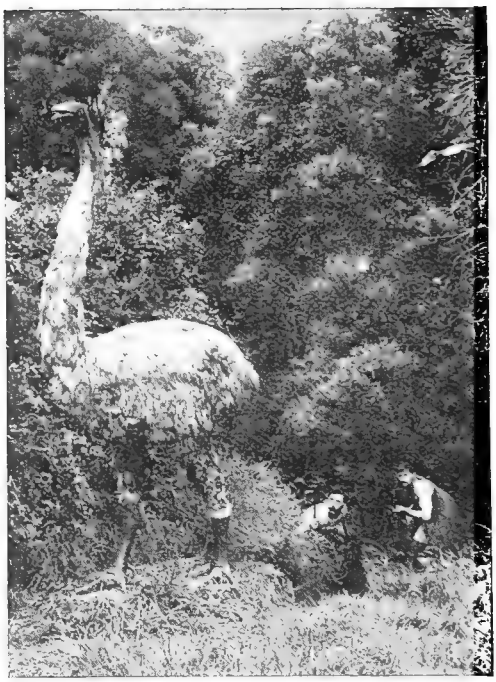
At one time the moa, an immense wingless bird, used to roam through the Australian bush in flocks of thousands. Now, however, it is quite extinct.

The moa belongs to the same family as the emu, which it greatly resembled, save in point of size, a height of 12ft. being the average attained by the bird.

Recently a rather imperfect skeleton of a moa was found. This was completed by a professor at the Otago University.

Then all possible information regarding the colour of the plumage was obtained, and emu skins, dyed as necessary, were sewn on to the skeleton, a perfect bird being the result.

In order that natural pictures of the bird might be obtanied to send round to various museums and institutions, the reclothed skeleton was photographed in its native surroundings, the Maoris posing as hunters.



The Moa was an Australian bird, and stood 12ft. high.

Photo *Lionel Bertram.*

The Would-be "Pearly King."

A SUIT WITH 7000 BUTTONS.

The coster is well known to be very fond of clothes trimmed with buttons in great number, but it is somewhat unexpected to hear that a bluejacket, who has served seven years in the Royal Navy, aspires to the honour of becoming the "Pearly King."

Mr. Francis Brooker, A.B., was for three years on foreign service in China. During that time he conceived a great liking for pearl buttons, and resolved that he would set to and make himself a suit trimmed with quantities of these.

Accordingly he obtained some blue Melton and Italian cloth, and made it up into a suit of the regular coster type.

This he trimmed with as many pearl buttons as he could get possession of, using altogether no fewer than seven thousand of them.

The making of the suit occupied all the spare time at Mr. Brooker's disposal while on the China station. He is so proud of it now that he says that an offer of £50 would not induce him to part with it.

Every year a contest is held among the costers of London, at which the wearer of the suit most profusely and artistically ornamented with pearl buttons is awarded the title of "The Pearly King." Mr. Brooker means to enter the contest this year.

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CYCLE RACING ON A "WHIRL."

Cycle races on a level track are generally of a somewhat startling nature; what must they be, then, when the track inclines at an angle of sixty degrees—only thirty degrees from the perpendicular?

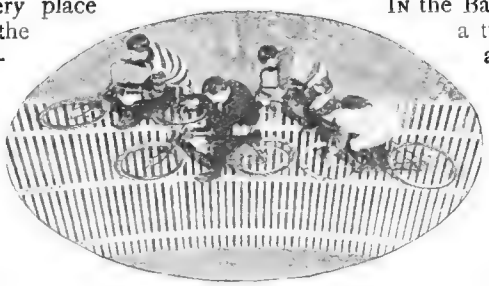
These extraordinary tracks are used for exhibition purposes principally, and have been given the name of "whirls."

They consist of a circular framework of wood and iron, wider at the top than at the bottom. To the wooden portion of the framework are secured slats, which present a comparatively smooth surface to the cycles.

Great care has to be taken in the selection of the material and in the construction of the tracks. So heavy is the strain owing to the speed at which the cycles go that the framework must be braced together with iron and securely bolted at every place where the slats forming the track intersect the circular frame.

In the races on this track both men and women engage at the same time.

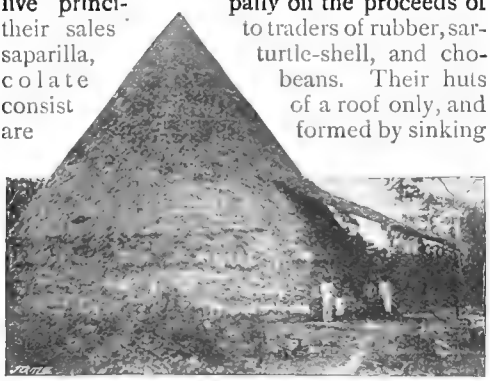
At times during the race the riders appear to be going parallel with the ground, and it is only by their speed that they can preserve their equilibrium. They must slacken very gradually to prevent a fall.



In this cycle race the contestants ride almost parallel with the earth.

A HUT THAT IS ALL ROOF.

The Indians dwelling north and south of the Isthmus of Panama are a very shy race. They live principally on the proceeds of their sales to traders of rubber, sarsaparilla, turtle-shell, and chocolate beans. Their huts consist of a roof only, and are formed by sinking tree trunks into the ground, then interlacing the tops with bamboo, finally covering them with a thatch of leaves of the macaw tree.



The huts of the Panama Indians consist of nothing but a roof.

STABLES IN A TREE.

In the Bahama Islands flourishes a tree, the roots of which attain to enormous proportions, often reaching to a height of fifteen or twenty feet above the surface of the earth, spreading in all directions underground as well, in order to obtain sustenance and give support to the trunk and branches.

The tree shown in the picture above is a native of Nassau, the capital town of New Providence, Bahama Islands. It stands in the public square, and is quite one of the sights of the island, people coming from far and near to see it.

On the tree grow innumerable balls of silky cotton, presenting an almost fairy-like appearance as they glisten in the sunlight. They are in great demand for stuffing cushions and pillows, being soft as down.

The spaces formed by the roots are often quite as large as fair-sized rooms, and, if roofed over, one tree would form a commodious dwelling-place for a family; in fact it would be infinitely superior to the average native hut. Holes could be cut in the roots to allow of internal communication.

Up to the present, however, the natives have not thought to utilise them as houses, though they are frequently in request as stables for horses.

In trees similar to this one, horses are stabled.

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FEMININE HAYMAKERS.

A New Industry that Girls have Adopted.

Fresh means of livelihood for women are repeatedly being discovered, but perhaps there is none more strenuous than that of working a farm.

Some years ago a farmer in Colorado died, leaving a family of seven daughters totally unprovided for. In order to save the family home from being sold up, the girls determined to work the farm themselves.

Not having enough money in hand to pay wages to labourers, the girls had to set to and work in grim earnest.

They donned overalls for the purpose—it would, of course, have been quite impossible for them to do their work in skirts—and, as will be noticed, they present a not unpleasing appearance.

The farm consists of 725 acres, so it can be imagined that during the summer months they have very little spare time on their hands.

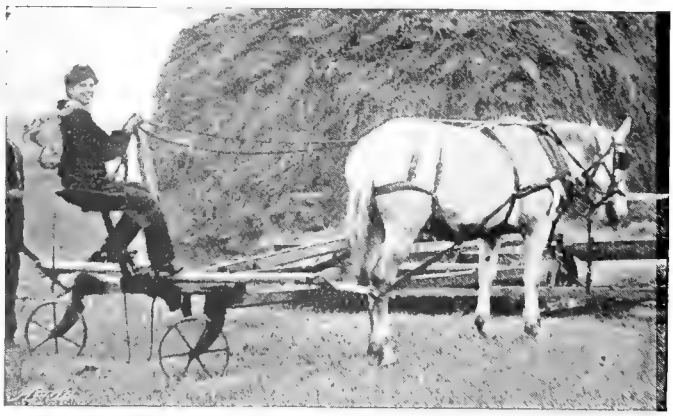
One of the girls has become quite expert at making stacks, and her efforts in this direction are far superior to those of the men for some miles round.

There is not much work to be done in the country during the winter months, and in consequence five of the sisters go to the nearest city to earn what they can there as stenographers or shop-assistants.

In spite of their unusual mode of living, these plucky girls have lost none of their femininity, and, when the day's work is done, they enjoy nothing more than putting on pretty frocks and spending a social evening with the neighbours.

Two of the girls raking the hay up into rows preparatory to carting.

With this odd-looking implement the hay is made up into heaps.



By means of an elevator worked by a horse, the hay is "pitched" on to the stack.

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THE OLD MAN IN THE CORNER

XII.—THE TRAGEDY OF BARNSDALE MANOR.

By The Baroness Orczy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The Old Man in the Corner	Who unravels the mystery to—
The Lady Journalist ...	Who relates it to the Royal readers.
Lord Barnsdale	Of Barnsdale Manor.
Lady Barnsdale	His wife.
Madame Quesnard	His aunt.
Alice Holt	Her amanuensis.
Sir Gilbert Culworth ...	A guest at Barnsdale Manor.
Sir Arthur Inglewood ...	A celebrated lawyer.
Jane Barlow	Lady Barnsdale's maid.

CHAPTER I.

"We have heard so much about the evils of Bridge," said the man in the corner that afternoon, "but I doubt whether that fashionable game has ever been responsible for a more terrible tragedy than the one at Barnsdale Manor."

"You think, then," I asked, for I saw he was waiting to be drawn out, "you think that the high play at Bridge did have something to do with that awful murder?"

"Most people think that much, I fancy," he replied, "although no one has arrived any nearer to the solution of the mystery which surrounds the tragic death of Mme. Quesnard at Barnsdale Manor on September 23rd last.

"On that fateful occasion, you must remember that the house party at the Manor included a number of sporting and fashionable friends of Lord and Lady Barnsdale, among whom Sir Gilbert Culworth was the only one whose name was actually mentioned during the hearing of this extraordinary case.

"It seems to have been a very gay house party indeed. In the day time Lord Barnsdale took some of his guests to shoot and fish, whilst a few devotees remained at home in order to indulge their passion for the modern craze of Bridge. It was generally understood that Lord Barnsdale did not altogether approve of quite so much gambling. He was not by any means well off; and although he was very much in love with his beautiful wife, he could ill afford to pay her losses at cards.

"This was the reason, no doubt, that Bridge at Barnsdale Manor was only indulged in whilst the host himself was out shooting or fishing; in the evenings there was music or billiards, but never any cards.

"One of the most interesting personalities in the Barnsdale ménage was undoubtedly Madame Nathalie Quesnard, a sister of Lord Barnsdale's mother, who, if you remember, was a Mademoiselle de la Trémouille. This Mme. Quesnard was extremely wealthy, the

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widow of a French West Indian planter, who had made millions in Martinique.

"She was very fond of her nephew, to whom, as she had no children or other relatives of her own, she intended to leave the bulk of her vast fortune. Pending her death, which was not likely to occur for some time, as she was not more than fifty, she took up her abode at Barnsdale Manor, together with her companion and amanuensis, a poor girl named Alice Holt.

"Mme. Quesnard was seemingly an amiable old lady; the only unpleasant trait in her character being her intense dislike of her nephew's beautiful and fashionable young wife. The old Frenchwoman, who, with all her wealth, had the unbounded and innate thriftiness peculiar to her nation, looked with perfect horror on Lady Barnsdale's extravagances, and above all on her fondness for gambling; and subsequently several of the servants at the Manor testified to the amount of mischief the old lady strove to make between her nephew and his young wife.

"Mme. Quesnard's dislike for Lady Barnsdale seems, moreover, to have been shared by her dependent and companion, the girl Alice Holt. Between them, these two ladies seem to have cordially hated the brilliant and much-admired mistress of Barnsdale Manor.

"Such were the chief inmates of the Manor last September, at the time the tragedy occurred. On that memorable night Alice Holt, who occupied a bedroom immediately above that of Mme. Quesnard, was awakened in the middle of the night by a persistent noise, which undoubtedly came from her mistress' room. The walls and floorings at the old Manor are very thick, and the sound was a very confused one, although the girl was quite sure that she could hear Mme. Quesnard's shrill voice raised as if in anger.

"She tried to listen for a time, and presently she heard a sound as if some piece of furniture had been knocked over, then nothing more. Somehow the sudden silence seemed to have frightened the girl more than the noise had done. Trembling with nervousness, she waited for some few minutes, then, unable to bear the suspense any longer, she got out of bed, slipped on her shoes and dressing-gown, and determined to run downstairs to see if anything were amiss.

"To her horror she found on trying her door that it had been locked on the outside. Quite convinced now that something must indeed be very wrong, she started screaming and banging against the door, determined to arouse the household, which she, of course, quickly succeeded in doing.

"The first to emerge from his room was Lord Barnsdale. He at once realised that the shrieks proceeded from Alice Holt's room. He ran upstairs helter-skelter, and as the key had been left in the door, he soon released the unfortunate girl, who by now was quite hysterical with anxiety for her mistress.

"Altogether, I take it, some six or seven minutes must have elapsed from the time when Alice Holt was first alarmed by the sudden silence following the noise in Mme. Quesnard's room, until she was released by Lord Barnsdale.

"As quickly and as coherently as she could she blurted forth all her fears about her mistress. I can imagine how picturesque the old Manor House must have looked then, with everybody, ladies and gentlemen, and servants, crowding into the hall, arrayed in various *négligé* attire, asking hurried questions, getting in each other's way, and all only dimly to be seen by the light of candles, carried by some of the more sensible ones in this motley crowd.

"However, in the meanwhile, Lord Barnsdale had managed to understand Alice Holt. He ran downstairs again and knocked at his aunt's door—he received no reply—he tried the handle—but the door was locked from the inside.

"Genuinely frightened now, he forced open the door, and then recoiled in horror.

"The window was wide open and a brilliant moonlight streamed into the room, weirdly illumining Mme. Quesnard's inanimate body, which lay full length upon the ground. Hastily begging the ladies not to follow him, Lord Barnsdale quickly went forward and bent over his aunt's body.

"There was no doubt that she was dead. An ugly wound at the back of her head, some red marks round her throat, all testified to the fact that the poor old lady had been assaulted and murdered. Lord Barnsdale at once sent for the nearest doctor, whilst he and Miss Holt lifted the unfortunate lady back to bed.

"The messenger who had gone for the doctor was at the same time instructed to deliver a note, hastily scribbled by Lord Barnsdale, at the local police station.

"That a hideous crime had been committed, with burglary for its object, no one could be in doubt for a moment. Lord Barnsdale and two or three of his guests had already thrown a glance into the next room, a little boudoir, which Mme. Quesnard used as a sitting-room.

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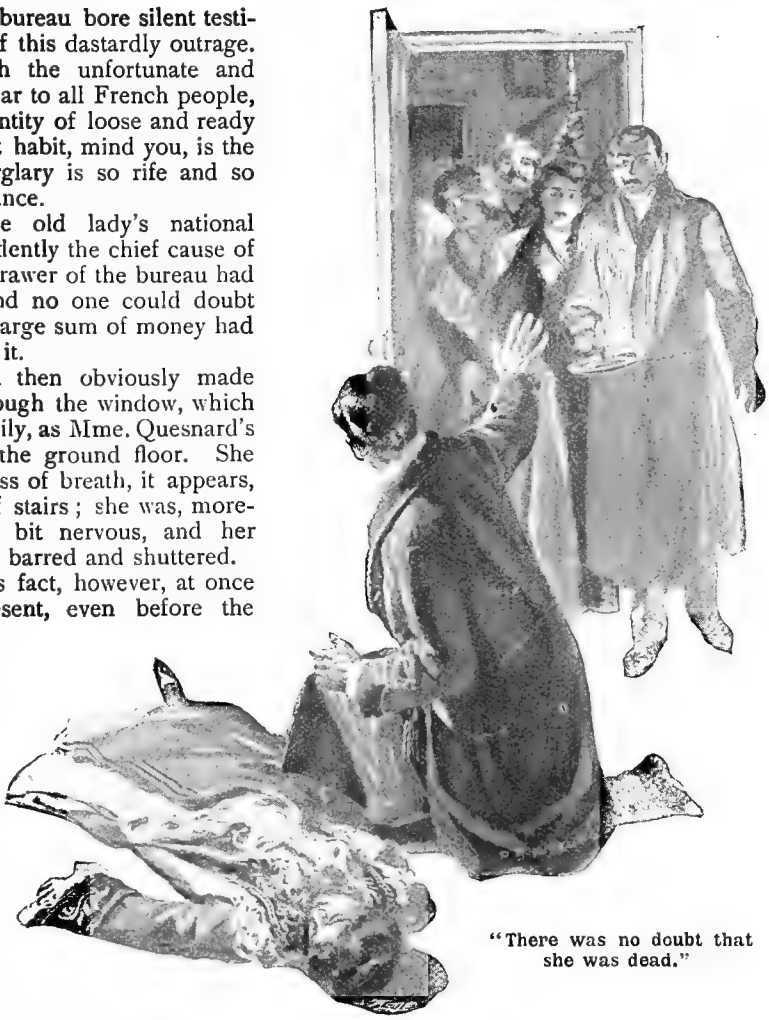
There the heavy oak bureau bore silent testimony to the motive of this dastardly outrage. Mme. Quesnard, with the unfortunate and foolhardy habit peculiar to all French people, kept a very large quantity of loose and ready money by her. That habit, mind you, is the chief reason why burglary is so rife and so profitable all over France.

"In this case the old lady's national characteristic was evidently the chief cause of her tragic fate; the drawer of the bureau had been forced open, and no one could doubt for a moment that a large sum of money had been abstracted from it.

"The burglar had then obviously made good his escape through the window, which he could do quite easily, as Mme. Quesnard's apartments were on the ground floor. She suffered from shortness of breath, it appears, and had a horror of stairs; she was, moreover, not the least bit nervous, and her windows were usually barred and shuttered.

"One very curious fact, however, at once struck all those present, even before the arrival of the detectives, and that was, that the old lady was partially dressed when she was found lying on the ground. She had slipped on an elaborate dressing-gown, had smoothed her hair, and put on her slippers. In fact, it was evident that she had in some measure prepared herself for the reception of the burglar.



"There was no doubt that she was dead."

"Throughout these hasty and amateurish observations conducted by Lord Barnsdale and two of his male guests, Alice Holt had remained seated beside her late employer's bedside, sobbing bitterly. In spite of Lord Barnsdale's intreaties she refused to move; and wildly waved aside any attempt at consolation offered to her by one or two of the older female servants who were present.

"It was only when everybody, at last, made up their minds to return to their rooms, that someone mentioned Lady Barnsdale's name. She had been taken ill and faint the evening before, and had not been well all night. Jane Barlow, her maid, expressed the hope that her ladyship was none the worse for this awful commotion, and must be wondering what it all meant.

"At this, suddenly, Alice Holt jumped up, like a madwoman.

"'What it all means?' she shrieked, whilst everyone looked at her in speechless horror, 'it means that that woman has murdered my mistress, and robbed her. I know it—I know it—I know it.'

"And once more sinking beside the bed she covered her dead mistress' hand with kisses, and sobbed and wailed as if her heart would break."

CHAPTER II.

"You may well imagine the awful commotion the girl's wild outburst had created in the old Manor House. Lady Barnsdale had been taken ill the previous evening, and, of course, no one had breathed a word of it to her, but equally of course it was freely talked

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about at Barnsdale Manor, in the neighbourhood, and even so far as in the London clubs.

"Lord and Lady Barnsdale were very well known in London society, and Lord Barnsdale's adoration for his beautiful wife was quite notorious.

"Alice Holt, after her frantic outburst, had not breathed another word. Silent and sullen she went up to her room, packed her things, and left the house, where, of course, it became impossible that she should stay another day. She refused Lord Barnsdale's generous offer of money and help, and only stayed long enough to see the detectives and reply to the questions they thought fit to put to her.

"The whole neighbourhood was in a fever of excitement; many gossips would have it that the evidence against Lady Barnsdale was conclusive, and that a warrant for her arrest had already been applied for.

"What had transpired was this:—

"It appears that the day preceding the tragedy, Bridge was, as usual, being played for, I believe, guinea points. Lord Barnsdale was out shooting all day, and though the guests at the Manor were very loyal to their hostess, and refused to make any positive statements, there seems to be no doubt that Lady Barnsdale lost a very large sum of money to Sir Gilbert Culworth.

"Be that as it may, nothing further could be gleaned by enterprising reporters fresh from town; the police were more than usually reticent, and everyone eagerly awaited the opening of the inquest, when sensational developments were expected in this mysterious case.

"It was held on September the 25th, in the servants' hall of Barnsdale Manor, and you may be sure that the large room was crowded to its utmost capacity. Lord Barnsdale was, of course, present, so was Sir Gilbert Culworth, but it was understood that Lady Barnsdale was still suffering from nervous prostration, and was unable to be present.

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"When I arrived there, and gradually made my way to the front rank, the doctor who had been originally summoned to the murdered lady's bedside was giving his evidence.

"He gave it as his opinion that the fractured skull from which Mme. Quesnard died was caused through her hitting the back of her head against the corner of the marble-topped washstand, in the immediate proximity of which she lay outstretched, when Lord Barnsdale first forced open the door. The stains on the marble had confirmed him in that opinion. Mme. Quesnard, he thought, must have fallen, owing to an onslaught made upon her by the burglar; the marks round the old lady's throat testified to this, although these were not the cause of death.

"After this there was a good deal of police evidence, with regard to the subsequent movements of the unknown miscreant. He had undoubtedly broken open the drawer of the bureau in the adjoining boudoir, the door of communication between this and Mme. Quesnard's bedroom being always kept open, and it was presumed that he had made a considerable haul both in gold and notes. He had then locked the bedroom door on the inside and made good his escape through the window.

"Immediately beneath this window, the flower-bed, muddy with the recent rain, bore the imprint of having been hastily trampled upon; but all actual footmarks had been carefully obliterated. Beyond this, all round the house, the garden paths are asphalted, and the burglar had evidently taken the precaution to keep to these asphalted paths, or else to cross the garden by the lawns.

"You must understand," continued the man in the corner, after a slight pause, "that throughout all this preliminary evidence, everything went to prove that the crime had been committed by an inmate of the house, or at any rate by someone well acquainted with its usages and its ménage. Alice Holt, whose room was immediately above that of Mme. Quesnard, and who was, therefore, most likely to hear the noise of the conflict and to run to her mistress' assistance, had been first of all locked up in her room. It had, therefore, become quite evident that the miscreant had commenced operations from inside the house, and had entered Mme. Quesnard's room by the door, and not by the window as had been at first supposed.

"But," added the funny creature excitedly, "as the old lady had, according to evidence, locked her door that night, it became more and more clear, as the case progressed, that she must of her own accord have admitted the person who subsequently caused her tragic death. This was, of course, confirmed by the fact that she was partially dressed when she was subsequently found dead.

"Strangely enough, with the exception of Alice Holt, no one else had heard any noise during the night. But, as I remarked before, the walls of these old houses are very thick, and no one else slept on the ground floor.

"Another fact which in the early part of the inquest went to prove that the outrage was committed by someone familiar with the house, was that Ben, the watch-dog, had not raised any alarm. His kennel was quite close to Mme. Quesnard's windows, and he had not even barked.

"I doubt if the law would take official cognisance of the dumb testimony of a dog; nevertheless, Ben's evidence was in this case quite worthy of consideration.

"You may imagine how gradually, as these facts were unfolded, excitement grew to fever pitch, and when at last Alice Holt was called, everyone literally held their breath, eagerly waiting to hear what was coming.

"She is a tall, handsome-looking girl, with fine eyes and a rich voice. Dressed in deep black she certainly looked an imposing figure as she stood there, repeating the story of how she was awakened in the night, by the sound of her mistress' angry voice, of the noise and sudden silence, and also of her terror, when she found that she had been locked up in her room.

"But obviously the girl had more to tell, and was only waiting for the coroner's direct question.

"'Will you tell the jury the reason why you made such an extraordinary and unwarrantable accusation against Lady Barnsdale?' he asked her at last, amid breathless silence in the crowded room.

"Everyone instinctively looked across the room to where Lord Barnsdale sat between his friend Sir Gilbert Culworth and his lawyer, Sir Arthur Inglewood, who had evidently come down from London in order to watch the case on his client's behalf. Alice Holt, too, looked across at Lord Barnsdale for a moment. He seemed attentive and interested, but otherwise quite calm and impassive.

"I, who watched the girl, saw a look of pity cross her face as she gazed at him, and I think, when we bear in mind that the distinguished English gentleman and the poor paid companion had known each other years ago, when they were girl and boy together in

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old Mme. Quesnard's French home, we may make a pretty shrewd guess why Alice Holt hated the beautiful Lady Barnsdale.

"'It was about six o'clock in the afternoon,' she began at last in the same quiet tone of voice, 'I was sitting sewing in Madame's boudoir, when Lady Barnsdale came into the bedroom. She did not see me, I know, for she began at once talking volubly to Madame about a serious loss she had just sustained at Bridge; several hundred pounds, she said.'

"'Well?' queried the coroner, for the girl had paused, almost as if she regretted what she had already said. She certainly threw an appealing look at Lord Barnsdale, who, however, seemed to take no notice of her.

"'Well,' she continued with sudden resolution, 'Madame was very angry at this; she declared that Lady Barnsdale deserved a severe lesson; her extravagances were a positive scandal. "Not a penny will I give you to pay your gambling debts," said Madame, "and, moreover, I shall make it my business to inform my nephew of your goings on whilst he is absent."

"'Lady Barnsdale was in a wild state of excitement. She begged and implored Madame to say nothing to Lord Barnsdale about it, and did her very best to try to induce her to help her out of her difficulties, just this once more. But Madame was obdurate. Thereupon Lady Barnsdale turned on her like a fury, called her every opprobrious name under the sun, and finally flounced out of the room, banging the door behind her.

"'Madame was very much upset after this,' continued Alice Holt, 'and I was not a bit astonished when directly after dinner she rang for me, and asked to be put to bed. It was then nine o'clock.

"'That is the last I saw of poor Madame alive.

"'She was very excited then, and told me that she was quite frightened of Lady Barnsdale—a gambler, she said, was as likely as not to become a thief, if opportunity arose. I offered to sleep on the sofa in the next room, for the old lady seemed quite nervous, a thing I have never known her to be. But she was too proud to own to nervousness, and she dismissed me finally, saying that she would lock her door, for once; a thing she scarcely ever did.'

"It was a curious story, to say the least of it, which Alice Holt thus told to an excited public. Cross-examined by the coroner, she never departed from a single point of it, her calm and presence of mind being only equalled throughout this trying ordeal by that of Lord Barnsdale, who sat seemingly unmoved whilst these terrible insinuations were made against his wife.

"But there was more to come. Sir Gilbert Culworth had been called; in the interests of justice, and in accordance with his duty as a citizen, he was forced to stand up and, all unwillingly, to add another tiny link to the chain of evidence that implicated his friend's wife in this most terrible crime.

"Right loyally he tried to shield her in every possible way, but cross-questioned by the coroner, harassed nearly out of his senses, he was forced to admit two facts, namely, that Lady Barnsdale had lost nearly £800 at Bridge the day before the murder, and that she had paid her debt to himself in full, on the following morning, in gold and notes.

"He had been forced, much against his will, to show the notes to the police; unfortunately for the justice of the case, however, the numbers of these could not be directly traceable as having been in Mme. Quesnard's possession at the time of her death. No diaries or books of accounts of any kind were found. Like most French people, she arranged all her money affairs herself, receiving her vast dividends in foreign money, and converting this into English notes and gold, as occasion demanded, at the nearest money-changer's that happened to be handy.

"She had, like a great many foreigners, a holy horror of banks. She would have mistrusted the Bank of England itself; as for solicitors, she held them in perfect abhorrence. She only went once to one in her life, and that was in order to make a will leaving everything she possessed unconditionally to her beloved nephew, Lord Barnsdale.

"But in spite of this difficulty about the notes, you see for yourself, do you not? how terribly strong was the circumstantial evidence against Lady Barnsdale. Her losses at cards, her appeal to Mme. Quesnard, the latter's refusal to help her, and finally the payment in full of the debt to Sir Gilbert Culworth on the following morning.

"There was only one thing that spoke for her, and that was, the very horror of the crime itself. It was practically impossible to conceive that a woman of Lady Barnsdale's refinement and education should have sprung upon an elderly woman, like some navvy's wife by the docks, and then that she should have had the presence of mind to jump out of the window, to obliterate her footmarks in the

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flower-bed, and, in fact, to have given the crime the look of a clever burglary.

"Still, we all know that money difficulties will debase the noblest of us, that greed will madden the sanest and most refined. When the inquest was adjourned I can assure you that no one had any doubt whatever that within twenty-four hours Lady Barnsdale would be arrested on the capital charge."

CHAPTER III.

"But the detectives in charge of the case had reckoned without Sir Arthur Inglewood, the great lawyer, who was watching the proceedings on behalf of his aristocratic clients," said the man in the corner, when he had assured himself of my undivided attention.

"The adjourned inquest brought with it, I assure you, its full quota of sensation. Again Lord Barnsdale was present, calm, haughty, and impassive, whilst Lady Barnsdale was still too ill to attend. But she had made a statement upon oath, in which, whilst flatly denying that her interview with the deceased at 6 p.m. had been of an acrimonious character as alleged by Alice Holt, she swore most positively that all through the night she had been ill, and had not left her room after 11.30 p.m.

"The first witness called after this affidavit had been read was Jane Barlow, Lady Barnsdale's maid.

"The girl deposed that on that memorable evening preceding the murder, she went up to her mistress' room at about 11.30 in order to get everything ready for the night. As a rule, of course, there was nobody about in the bedroom at that hour, but on this occasion when Jane Barlow entered the room, which she did without knocking, she saw her mistress sitting by her desk.

"'Her ladyship looked up when I came in,' continued Jane Barlow, 'and seemed very cross with me for not knocking at the door. I apologised, then began to get the room tidy: as I did so I could see that my lady was busy counting a lot of money. There were lots of sovereigns and banknotes. My lady put some together in an envelope and addressed it, then she got up from her desk and went to lock up the remainder of the money in her jewel safe.'

"'And this was at what time?' asked the coroner.

"'At about half-past eleven, I think, sir,' repeated the girl.

"'Well,' said the coroner, 'did you notice anything else?'

"'Yes,' replied Jane, 'whilst my lady was at her safe, I saw the envelope in which she had put the money lying on the desk. I couldn't help looking at it, for I knew it was ever so full of banknotes, and I saw that my lady had addressed it to Sir Gilbert Culworth.'

"'Not a penny will I give you to pay your gambling debts,' said Madame."

"At this point Sir Arthur Inglewood jumped to his feet and handed something over to the coroner; it was evidently an envelope which had been torn open. The coroner looked at it very intently, then suddenly asked Jane Barlow if she had happened to notice anything about the envelope which was lying on her ladyship's desk that evening.

"'Oh yes, sir!' she replied unhesitatingly, 'I noticed my lady had made a splotch, right on top of the C in Sir Gilbert Culworth's name.'

"'This, then, is the envelope,' was the

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coroner's quiet comment, as he handed the paper across to the girl.

"'Yes, there's the splotch,' she replied, 'I'd know it anywhere.'

"So you see," continued the man in the corner, with a chuckle, "that the chain of circumstantial evidence against Lady Barnsdale was getting somewhat entangled. It was indeed fortunate for her that Sir Gilbert Culworth had not destroyed the envelope in which she had handed him over the money on the following day.

"Alice Holt, as you know, heard the conflict and raised the alarm much later in the night, when everybody was already in bed, whilst long before that Lady Barnsdale was apparently in possession of the money with which she could pay back her debt.

"Thus the motive for the crime so far as she was concerned was entirely done away with. Directly after the episode witnessed by Jane Barlow, Lady Barnsdale had a sort of nervous collapse, and went to bed feeling very ill. Lord Barnsdale was terribly concerned about her, he and the maid remained alternately by her bedside for an hour or two; finally Lord Barnsdale went to sleep in his dressing-room, whilst Jane also finally retired to rest.

"Ill as Lady Barnsdale undoubtedly was then, it was absolutely preposterous to conceive that she could after that have planned and carried out so monstrous a crime, without any motive whatever. To have locked Alice Holt's door, then gone downstairs, forced her way into the old lady's room, struggled with her, to have jumped out of the window, and run back into the house by the garden, might have been the work of a determined woman, driven mad by the desire for money, but became absolutely out of the question in the case of a woman suffering from nervous collapse, and having apparently no motive for the crime.

"Of course Sir Arthur Inglewood made the most of the fact that no mud was found on any shoes or dress belonging to Lady Barnsdale. The flower-bed was very soft with the heavy rain of the day before, and Lady Barnsdale could not possibly have jumped even from a ground-floor window and trampled on the flower-bed, without staining her skirts.

"Then there was another point which the clever lawyer brought to the coroner's notice. As Alice Holt had stated in her sworn evidence that Mme. Quesnard had owned to being frightened of Lady Barnsdale that night, was it likely that she would *of her own accord* have opened the door to her in the middle of the night, without at least calling for assistance?

"Thus the matter has remained a strange and unaccountable puzzle. It has always been called the 'Barnsdale Mystery' for that very reason. Everyone, somehow, has always felt that Lady Barnsdale did have something to do with that terrible tragedy. Her husband has taken her abroad, and they have let Barnsdale Manor; it almost seems as if the ghost of the old French woman had driven them forth from their own country.

"As for Alice Holt, she maintains to this day that Lady Barnsdale was the culprit, and I understand that she has not yet given up all hope of collecting a sufficiency of evidence to have the beautiful and fashionable woman of society arraigned for this hideous murder."

(*At this point you might try to think out the solution for yourself.*—ED. ROYAL.)

CHAPTER IV.

"Will she succeed, do you think?" I asked at last.

"Succeed? Of course she won't," he retorted excitedly. "Lady Barnsdale never committed that murder; no woman, except, perhaps, an East-end factory hand, could have done it at all."

"But then?——" I urged.

"Why then," he replied with a chuckle, "the only logical conclusion is that the robbery and the murder were not committed by the same person, nor at the same hour of the night; moreover, I contend that there was no premeditated murder, but that the old lady died from the result of a pure accident."

"But how?" I gasped.

"This is my version of the story," he said, excitedly, as his long bony fingers started fidgeting, fidgeting with that eternal bit of string. "Lady Barnsdale, pressed for money, made an appeal to Mme. Quesnard, which the latter refused, as we know. Then there was an acrimonious dispute between the two ladies, after which came the dinner hour, then Madame, feeling ill and upset, went up to bed at nine o'clock.

"Now, my contention is that undoubtedly the robbery had been committed before that, between the dispute and Madame's bed time.

"By whom?

"By Lady Barnsdale, of course, who, as the mistress of the house, could come and go from room to room without exciting any comment, who, moreover, at 6 p.m. was hard-pressed for money, and who but a few

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hours later was handling a mass of gold and banknotes.

"But the strain of committing even an ordinary theft is very great upon a refined woman's organisation. Lady Barnsdale has a nervous break-down. Well! what is the most likely thing to happen? Why! that she should confess everything to her husband who worships her, and no doubt express her repentance at what she had done.

"Then imagine Lord Barnsdale's horror! The old lady had not discovered the theft before going to bed. That was only natural, since she was feeling unwell, and was not likely to sit up at night counting her money; the lock of the bureau drawer having been tampered with, would perhaps not attract her attention at night.

"But in the morning, the very first thing, she would discover everything, at once suspect the worst, and who knows, make a scandal, talk of it before Alice Holt, Lady Barnsdale's arch enemy, and all before restitution could be made.

"No, no, that restitution must be made at once; not a minute must be lost, since any moment might bring forth discovery, and perhaps an awful catastrophe.

"I take it that Mme. Quesnard and her nephew were on very intimate terms. He hoped to arouse no one by going to his aunt's room, but in order to make quite sure that Alice Holt, hearing a noise in her mistress' room, should not surreptitiously come down, and perhaps play eaves-dropper at the momentous interview, he turned the key of the girl's door as he went past, and locked her in.

"Then he knocked at his aunt's door (gently, of course, for old people are light sleepers), and called her by name. Mme. Quesnard, recognising her nephew's voice, slipped on her dressing-gown, smoothed her hair, and let him in.

"Exactly what took place at the interview it is, of course, impossible for any human being to say. Here even I can but conjecture," he added with inimitable conceit, "but we can easily imagine that, having heard Lord Barnsdale's confession of his wife's folly, the old lady, who as a Frenchwoman was of quick temper and unbridled tongue, would indulge in not very elegant rhetoric on the subject of the woman she had always disliked.

"Lord Barnsdale would, of course, defend his wife, and the old lady, with feminine obstinacy, would continue the attack. Then some insulting epithet, a word only perhaps, roused the devoted husband's towering indignation—the meekest man on earth becomes a mad bull when he really loves, and the woman he loves is insulted.

"I maintain that the old lady's death was really due to a pure accident; that Lord Barnsdale gripped her by the throat, in a moment of mad anger, at some hideous insult hurled at his wife; of that I am as convinced as if I had witnessed the whole scene. Then the old lady fell, hit her head against the marble, and Lord Barnsdale realised that he was alone at night in his aunt's room, and that he had killed her.

"What would anyone do under the circumstances?" he added excitedly. "Why, of course, collect his senses and try to save himself from what might prove to be consequences of the most awful kind. This Lord Barnsdale thought he could best do by giving the accident, which looked so like murder, the appearance of a burglary.

"The lock of the desk in the next room had already been forced open; he now locked the door on the inside, threw open the shutter and the window, jumped out as any burglar would have done; and, being careful to obliterate his own footmarks, he crept back into the house and thence into his own room, without alarming the watch-dog, who naturally knew his own master. He was, of course, just in time before Alice Holt succeeded in rousing the household with her screams.

"And thus you see," he added, "there are no such things as mysteries. The police call them so, so do the public, but every crime has its perpetrator, and every puzzle its solution. My experience is that the simplest solution is invariably the right one."

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MR. X —HIS PAGES.

A letter from "Mr. X's" post-bag: "Dear 'Mr. X,' I always look forward with Xtreme Xcitement to your Xcellent pages in THE ROYAL. They are Xactly what I like and I think you Xcel in them. As I should Xceedingly like to win a puzzle penknife I am sending you some puzzles. They are, without Xception or Xaggeration, MOST Xtraordinary. I hope, when you Xamine them, you will Xclaim, will consider them Xhilarating, and will Xhibit them in your pages. Please Xcuse this, as I am not an Xpert at letter-writing and feel I have not Xpressed myself Xtra plainly."

Puzzle Penknives or Puzzle Purses will be given as prizes to readers who forward new puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X." and wishing for a reply, should inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE), 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

"Mr. X's" Monthly Prize.

No. 9.

[Answers must be sent in before March 20th, addressed "Mr. X," care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and marked on the outside "No. 9."]

This month "Mr. X" wants his readers to prove obvious impossibilities. It sounds a tall order, but is easy enough when you know the way. For example, to prove that a lie is nothing:

A lie is a story.
A story is a tale.
A tail is a brush (of a fox).
A brush is a broom.
A brougham is a carriage.
A carriage is a trap.
A trap is a gin.
Gin is a spirit.
A spirit is a ghost, and
A ghost is nothing.

"Mr. X" offers Three Prizes of Five Shillings (one prize for each transformation) to the senders of what are, in his opinion, the best proofs, on the above lines, that (1) A bat is a ball; (2) A brush is a comb; (3) A chair is a rabbit.

Very Simple.

Milly: "How do we know for certain that Moses did not take mustard into the Ark?"

Billy: "Don't know, I'm sure."

Milly: "Because Moses was never in the Ark, stupid."

Brutal.

A.: "Is there a post here to-morrow morning?"

B.: "Yes.

A.: "Well, knock your head against it."

Black Art.

In most tricks done with the aid of an accomplice it is above all things essential that the accomplice should not be discovered. Here is an amusing little piece of "magic" in which the confederate openly declares himself, the puzzle being for other people to discover how he helps his friend.

One person goes out of the room. Those remaining think of any three-figure number. On the magician's return, his accomplice juggles mysteriously with the poker, tongs, and shovel, lays them out heads together on the carpet—and his friend instantly gives the required number.

The solution is as simple as it is hard to discover. The two friends imagine that the touching heads of the fire-irons are the centre of a clock, each implement points to where a figure on the face of such a clock would be, and the three figures so indicated form the number chosen. The order in which the implements are read is P, T, S, (poker, tongs, shovel). If the poker was at IX, the tongs at III, and the shovel at V the answer would be 935.

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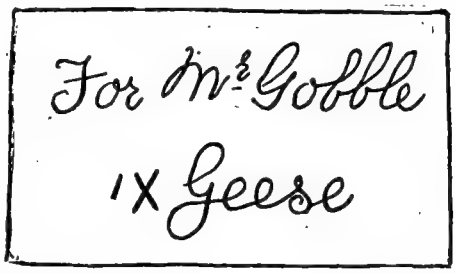
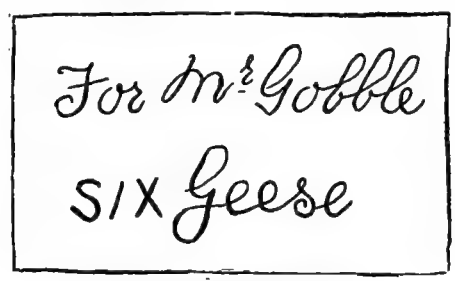
Ingenious Dishonesty.

"Yes, I'll give you a job," said Farmer Giles to a man who applied for work. "Just take these nine geese to Mr. Gobble on the hill," and he packed the geese in a basket, placing on top this label:



Off went the man, but, ere he reached Mr. Gobble's, was tempted, and gave way. Taking out three geese he concealed them in the hedge, and delivered only six. "But I ordered nine," said Mr. Gobble. "Well, look at the label," replied the man. And Mr. Gobble, doing so, saw that he was indeed only entitled to half-a-dozen geese. How had the man managed it? He had not altered the actual figures. Well, this is the label as Mr. Gobble read it:



ENOUGH TO DRIVE YOU MAD.

Twice two of us are six of us,
And six of us are three,
And three of us are five of us,
Whatever can we be?
And if you aren't contented,
And think you'd like some more,
Then seven of us are five of us,
And five of us are four.

The answer to this exceedingly complicated puzzle is: The number of letters in each number before the words "of us." Thus twice two of us are six because there are three letters in the word two. Three of us are five because there are five letters in the word three and so on.

Q. Why did the coal scuttle?
A. Because the table had cedar legs (seed her legs).

The Catchers Caught.

Adolphus: "I say, Algy, old man, do you know the story of the bed?"

Algernon: "No."

Adolphus: "That's where you lie! Not bad, is it? Ta-ta!"

Algernon: "One moment, Dolphy, old chap. Do you know the story of the dirty window?"

Adolphus: "No."

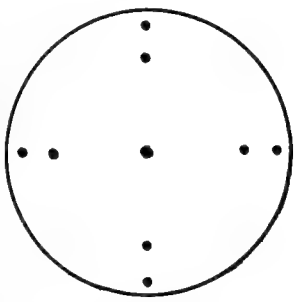
Algernon: "It's no good telling you, because you couldn't see through it."

Adolphus: "Ha! Do you know the story of——"

[*No, and certainly I do not intend to,—"Mr. X."*]

Circles Within Circles.

Here is a circle containing nine dots. The puzzle is within that circle to describe three other circles, so that each dot is in a segment of its own.



ABOUT DUCKS.

Why does a duck go under water?
For divers reasons.
Why does he come up again?
For sundry (sun dry) purposes.
Why does he go under again?
To liquidate his bill.

"MR. X's" MONTHLY PRIZE.—No. 6.

RESULT.

"Mr. X" offered a prize of five shillings for what was, in his opinion, the best telegram whose nine words commenced respectively with the letters **C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S**, the telegram to be sent to "Mr. X."

"Mr. X" has received a great number of telegrams in response to his offer, and he has found some difficulty in selecting the prize winner from the number of ingenious attempts that have come in.

The five shillings goes to Miss A. Batt, of 66 Melbourne Road, Chatham, for the following:

"Christmas! Happiest rejoicings I send to Magazine and Staff."

Puzzle purses have been sent to the following: Mrs. E. N. Lawton, Woodbank, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire; Miss E. F. Stokes, 35 North Road, Hertford, Herts; Miss M. Alexander, Shedfield Vicarage, Botley, Hants; and Mrs. H. V. Belsten, 3 Carlton Road, Walthamstow, N.E.

These are some of the other good attempts that were received:

"Congratulate heartily ROYAL in securing thy merry, amusing self."

"Congratulate heartily. ROYAL is still the marvel at Sixpence."

"Came home repeating impossible solutions. Took morphia; am sleeping."

"Christmas has returned. I sincerely tender my annual salutations."

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"Help! Help!"

Real Life Romances.

The Incidents on this and the Five Succeeding Pages have been Selected by the Royal Humane Society as Relating Some of the Bravest Deeds of Recent Years.

In China Waters.

HOW THE FOURTH OFFICER OF THE "MALACCA" SAVED THE QUARTERMASTER.

SOME two miles off the Chinese port of Woosung, the P. and O. steamer *Malacca* lay riding at anchor. The night was dark and cold—biting winds swept the decks.

On board, the scene was illuminated by the glare of several electric lamps. Sailors were shouting and hurrying hither and thither, busily engaged in unloading the cargo. Moored alongside the *Malacca* lay a Chinese junk, into which the great bales were transferred at top speed.

Suddenly, amidst the shouting of natives and clanging of machinery, a cry ran out:

"Man overboard!"

The quartermaster, while attempting to board the junk, had fallen over the side. From end to end of the ship the cry was echoed. A cold feeling crept over the heart of every man. On such a night as this, what hope was there of rescue?

"Lower a boat!" the command came from an officer on the *Malacca*, and a dozen men sprang to the davits.

Meanwhile the swift running tide was fast bearing the drowning man away from the ship. In the fitful glimmer that the electric lamps cast upon the sea, his struggles were dimly visible. Soon his strength failed. He beat the water with his hands, calling the while loudly in an agony of fear.

"Help! Help!" The words were carried by the biting wind to the anxious men on board. But who could brave the rushing tide, the icy seas, on such a night as this?

Even to lower a boat seemed a hopeless task. Long before it could be manned and floated, the quartermaster would be swept out of sight.

Suddenly, a startled exclamation distracted the men from their drowning comrade. On the bulwarks, standing coatless and capless, they beheld the tall figure of the fourth officer (Mr. J. Shearme). One moment he balanced thus, then plunged into the surging sea beneath.

A cheer broke from the crew, and still another, and another, as the officer's head emerged above the waves. He was a powerful swimmer, they all knew, and as they watched, each man recalled how on the last voyage to Shanghai he had rescued a European from the river.

With strong and steady strokes the fourth officer swam towards the drowning quartermaster. Now he had seized him by the shoulders, and was battling back to the ship.

In what seemed an eternity he drew within twenty yards of the vessel. A rope curled through the air, the officer caught it, and binding it around his unconscious comrade, both were hauled on deck.

For this brave deed Mr. J. Shearme received the Silver Medal of the Royal Humane Society, and the Stanhope Medal for the bravest rescue of the year.

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A Soldier Hero.

HOW A GUNNER SAVED A FAMILY FROM SUFFOCATION.

HERE is the story of how William Hall, a gunner in the Royal Artillery, earned the Royal Humane Society's Silver Medal, and also a greater distinction, the Stanhope Medal, for the greatest act of bravery recognised in the year 1898.

In one of the rooms of an electro-plating factory, situated in Clerkenwell Close, worked a man named Franklin. Scattered about the floor were several large bowls filled with various chemicals necessary to the plating process.

No accident had ever befallen Franklin before, nor would anything have have happened that day had not his wife called with her three small children.

Whilst she talked, the children romped about the floor. A sudden shriek, followed by a crash, broke from the little boy. In his excitement he had overturned two bowls full of chemicals, the one containing sulphuric acid, the other cyanide of potassium.

Instantly a dense blue cloud rose from the mingled chemicals. The room became filled with choking, poisonous fumes. With a terrified cry the man sprang to his feet, then clasping his hands to his throat, the startled wife saw him fall senseless to the floor. The next glance revealed her children lying prone.

A mortal dread came over her—she felt powerless to assist them—another minute she herself would fall. Fresh air, that she must have or die. Opening the door, she fell panic-stricken into the street.

A small crowd soon collected before the factory, attracted by the woman's screams. Trembling, with many tears she told the awful tale. Not one amongst the crowd dared to venture into the deadly smoke.

Unnoticed in the excitement, a soldier had approached, and now stood questioning a bystander. "A father and his three children are lying suffocated in that room," one told him, indicating with a gesture a window from which faint threads of smoke curled upwards.

More the soldier did not stay to hear. Rushing to the door he bounded up the stairs. On the top he paused, and tied his handkerchief round his mouth. Then he entered. The air even filtering through the handkerchief choked him, and his eyes smarted so intolerably that he could scarcely see.

A small boy lay motionless on the floor. Picking him up, the soldier staggered from the room and handed him to one of the bystanders who had ventured up the stairs.

Again he rushed into the room. This time he saved the second child. Back, moving as one possessed, he vanished into the smoke to reappear five seconds later with a baby in his arms.

Only the father remained. The soldier leant against the banister, his throat was parched and smarting, he could scarcely breathe. But a man lay dying not fifteen feet away —he *must* be saved!

Scarcely able to move, once more he staggered into the room and groped along to where Franklin lay. Half-lifting, half-dragging, he brought him out to safety, then himself sank senseless to the floor.

He vanished . . . to reappear five seconds later with a baby in his arms.

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Attacked by a Crocodile.

TELLING HOW A NATIVE SERGEANT WON THE ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY'S MEDAL.

TRAMP, tramp! The regular footfalls of approaching infantry arose from a battalion of the 1st Uganda Rifles. Presently, amidst a cloud of dust, the troops emerged into view.

They looked a fine body of men, this native regiment, with the brilliant sunlight streaming upon their khaki uniforms and turbaned heads.

Evidently they were seeking a convenient spot on which to camp. The path led along the bank of the sluggish Juba river. From mid-stream, every now and then, there came a splash of some huge creature, and at times a long, hideous, scaly head peered at the men with beady eyes, then vanished with a swirl.

On either side, placed in the river some yards from the banks, a light stockade had been erected by the natives, in order to keep the crocodiles from ravaging the neighbouring villages.

The battalion had now halted and the men were performing their duties. Presently, one of the soldiers walked down to the river, and began washing his hands in the cool waters Beyond the palings he knew many hungry crocodiles gazed eagerly at him. But there on the other side they were powerless to reach him.

Under ordinary circumstances this would have been the case. But to-day, it so happened that one of the stakes forming the stockade had broken down. And through this a long, lizard-like creature had found its way.

Feeling refreshed, the man rolled up his sleeves and plunged in his arms up to the elbow. Scarcely had he done so, than a huge mouth emerged from the water, and seized the man by the hands.

He screamed loudly for help. In vain he struggled to drag himself free. The powerful reptile held him in a grip of iron. With one swift move of its tail it dragged him into deep water, and sought to escape by the gap in the stockade.

The agonised cries of the drowning man alarmed the camp. A score of soldiers rushed to the river, jabbering excitedly in their dialect, and asking what had best be done.

None seemed to know until a *subidar* (native sergeant) approached. Quickly realising what had happened, he plunged into the river, and seized the man by the legs,

A huge mouth emerged from the water, and seized the man by the hands.

endeavouring vainly to drag him from the monster.

At last, seeing the hopelessness of the task, the sergeant shouted for a rifle. A private promptly handed him the weapon. Raising it to his shoulder he fired.

The shot took effect. The crocodile released its prey, and disappeared through the gap in the stockade.

The rifleman no longer screamed. Once he sank, then rose, to be grasped by the brave sergeant and quickly borne ashore.

This little picture of what happened in a comparatively unknown part of Africa was not forgotten. News of the gallant deed was shortly sent to England, and some months later the officer in command of the 1st Uganda Rifles pinned the Royal Humane Society's medal on the breast of the Sergeant, Shamus Khan.

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In the Depths of the Earth.

THE STORY OF AN ESCAPE FROM FIRE DAMP.

THE scene of this story is Burnhope Colliery, Durham; the time one day in December.

Down the pit mouth the engine-driver had lowered the last cage full of colliers. Above the mine the sun shone in golden haze, lighting up the numerous smoking shafts that abounded in the district.

Far down in the depths below, their small safety lamps barely illuminating the intense darkness, the colliers moved to their work. Every few minutes loud shouts rent the air, and a dozen small trucks full of coal, and drawn by a couple or more small ponies, dashed past.

Some distance along one of the main galleries half-a-dozen men were undermining a seam. Presently, one of them called for a wedge. The foreman, seeing that none were left, dispatched one of the colliers to a disused part of the mine, where a wedge had been left some weeks before.

Half-an-hour went by, and still the man had not returned. Realising that something must have befallen him, the foreman ordered the miners to cease their work, and, led by him, all set off to search for the missing man.

Lamps in hand, the rescue-party moved cautiously towards the disused quarter of the mine. In every mind two thoughts were uppermost. Had their comrade been crushed by a sudden falling in of the mine, or had an outpouring of coal-gas overpowered him?

A shout came from the foremost miner. He turned and staggered back, gasping hard for breath. All gathered round him. Each man knew the dread meaning of the incident, and why their comrade had not returned. The mine in that part had become filled with fire-damp.

Who would venture to save him? Each man felt it to be his duty—but all hesitated. For well they knew the danger beyond—the choking gas, the fight for breath, and in the end, most likely, the cold clammy floor of the mine!

It was suggested that the overman should be sent for, and, whilst two of the miners hurried away, the others kept watch in silence.

A few minutes later the men returned, bringing with them the overman, by name Richard Summerbell. In a few words the plight of their comrade was told to him.

Summerbell staggered towards them, holding in his arms the missing man.

"He may be dead," Summerbell remarked; "but some attempt at least must be made to rescue him."

Saying this, he took his handkerchief, and steeping it in water, bound it round his mouth.

In silence the men watched him disappear into the deadly darkness.

Time passed slowly. It seemed ages since he left them. At last, unable to bear the awful suspense, one of the men shouted. Then, suddenly, a faint light appeared, and Summerbell staggered towards them, holding in his arms the missing man—alive, but unconscious.

Such is the story of the gallant deed that gained for Richard Summerbell the Medal of the Royal Humane Society.

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The rope was firmly fixed to his comrade.

A Chamber of Death.

HOW A WORKMAN SAVED THREE OF HIS COMRADES.

THE hero of this story is Richard Allen, an employé of the Wear Fuel Company, of Sunderland. It began in this way. A workman, by name McLeod, had one day been ordered to repair a tar-still belonging to the Fuel Company. At the time the still was warm, so in order to avoid accidents from the deadly fumes that it gives forth in this state, McLeod had been warned not to begin the work until the still had completely cooled.

However, disdaining the caution, the man, with the assistance of two others, set about examining the apparatus from without. It was a large structure, some nine feet in diameter, and eight and a half in depth.

The inspection over, McLeod next proceeded to lower a ladder in order to make a survey of the interior. Scarcely had he reached the bottom-most rung of the ladder than a peculiar sensation gripped his throat.

With hands extended wildly, he clutched blindly at the ladder, then sank unconscious upon the tar-strewn bottom of the still.

Seeing what had happened, one of his comrades, first shouting loudly for help, hurriedly descended to the rescue. But the fumes overpowering him, he, too, fell insensible.

Undaunted by the terrible sight, a third man came forward. Stepping on to the ladder he drew a deep breath and leapt into the still. A moment later, his arms incircled the nearest figure. He dragged him towards the ladder and prepared to ascend, when suddenly, unable longer to hold his breath, he gasped.

The fumes had gained another victim!

Inside the still three men, tar-bespattered, lay sleeping the sleep that would soon end in death.

And now a fourth, one Richard Allen, stood peering into the still. Eight feet below he could see his comrades. It looked a little distance—but all around were the deadly gases!

Picking up a rope he drew a long breath, and hastened down the ladder. An instant he bent over an unconscious form, the next sped up the ladder. But he had succeeded. The rope was firmly fixed to his comrade, and he drew him to the top. One life was saved!

Again Allen descended. Again he fought the awful fumes. Again he conquered.

Down once more Allen clambered, and quickly made fast the rope. This time he only just succeeded; he was almost choked by the fumes.

As Allen knelt, with head throbbing and awhirl, other comrades, who had soon collected, began to draw up the last man. By some means the rope had caught in the machinery. Another journey must yet be made down into the dimness if the man were to be saved.

Allen was ready. His mind had regained its clearness. Down once more he disappeared and freed the ropes.

This is the plain, unvarnished tale of how Richard Allen won the Silver Medal of the Royal Humane Society, and at the same time a still greater reward—the Stanhope Gold Medal, for the bravest deed performed in the year 1900.

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From the Jaws of Sharks.

AN ACT OF HEROISM THAT GAINED TWO MEDALS.

WITH sails outspread and steaming slowly, the *Investigator*, a small boat belonging to the Indian Marine Survey, moved southward across the Bay of Bengal. Behind her dragged a rope, for she was engaged in trawling at a depth of 1800 fathoms.

Two long, dark fins approached. Stealthily they moved right up to the boat, then, turning, sped swiftly round and round her. Sometimes they sank, then rose, but always kept together. For a short time this passed unnoticed, until a sudden shout of "Sharks!" announced that the intruders had been seen.

One of the sailors, baiting a hook with a piece of fat, cast it overboard. Instantly the water was lashed into foam, and a violent jerk rushed the line through the sailor's hands.

In vain he tried to check the mad rush of the enraged shark. Diving some feet below the surface, the great fish rushed towards the stern of the boat. A moment later, it fouled the trawl-rope.

Fearing that the net might be damaged, the captain ordered the gunner, by name Peterson, to shoot the monster. Rifle in hand, the man repaired to the stern of the boat, thinking from there to gain a better view of the shark. Cautiously peering over the side, he raised the rifle. As he did so his foot slipped, and, with a wild shriek, he vanished over the side.

"Man overboard!" a terrible cry at all times, but now a thousand times more so, with the savage, hungry fish waiting below.

Lower a boat! Was there time? The face of the gunner rose to the surface and gazed appealingly for succour.

Suddenly, Lieutenant Huddleston, on duty at the forecastle, threw off his jacket, and, rushing to the side, plunged headlong to the rescue.

With strained eyes, the crew peered down, endeavouring to catch a sight of the sharks. Ten yards away floated the mate of the one that was struggling on the line. The head of the lieutenant appeared above the surface. Clearing the salt water from his eyes, he swam swiftly, apparently unconscious of the terrible risk he was running, towards the drowning man.

Would the dark, long, torpedo-shaped fish attack? This thought racked the minds of all.

Now the lieutenant had seized the drowning gunner in his arms. A cheer broke from the crew. Then, in answer to a quick word of command, a lifebuoy, attached to a long rope, was thrown to the struggling men.

Ages seemed to pass to those on board, before the lieutenant, bearing the half-conscious gunner, reached the buoy. But when at length he did, the crew vied with each other to share the honour of drawing him aboard.

Some months later, this daring deed of heroism met with the distinction it deserved. Not only did the hero, Lieutenant W. B. Huddleston, receive the Silver Medal of the Royal Humane Society, but he was also awarded the Stanhope Medal, as a tribute to the bravest deed of the year.

With a wild shriek, he vanished over the side.

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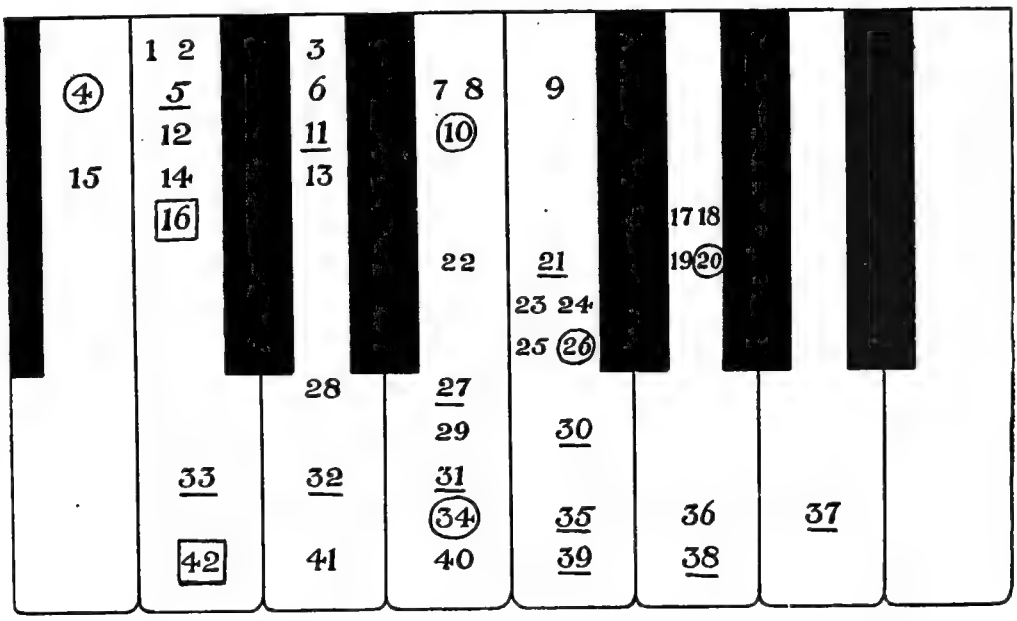

The inspiriting strains of the British National Anthem.

(The circle indicates a longer note, the underline the shorter onés, and the square the pauses.)

MUSIC WITHOUT NOTES.

How a Beginner Can Teach Himself to Play the Piano.

By George Western.

"If I could only play the piano, I should be perfectly happy!" How often have we heard that cry? And from how many lips? Now we all know that to play the piano really well—brilliantly, up to concert standing—one must begin early and practise very hard, and have good and very expensive lessons. That goes without saying. But to play a little bit—to be able to play a pretty air that one hears at the theatre or concert, well—there you have a very different thing.

Here is a simple way of playing "God Save the King," and a dozen pretty and popular songs, that needs no learning, and can be done by anyone as easily as possible, Make a large sketch of the keyboard of the piano, or rather a section of it, let us say twelve or thirteen keys in the middle, opposite the lock of the piano. Shade the black keys to distinguish them from the white ones. Now write out the tune of, let us say, the National Anthem on this keyboard so that anyone can look at it and play it on the piano.

Sing over the song, but in place of words sing numbers. Instead of singing "God save our gracious King," sing "One, two, three, four, five, six." The one and the two come on the same note. So mark on the middle key of the diagram, the key that corresponds with the one opposite the lock of the piano, (1) and (2). Then put the (3) on the next note. The (4) will be put on the note below the "middle C"—that is what musicians call this note opposite the lock. The (5) you will find, by fingering it out on the piano, is on the middle note again, the (6) is on the note above.

Now you see how to go on, and by giving a number to each word you will work out the tune on your diagram quite easily.

You must put the numbers clearly on the key-diagram, and then you will soon be able to play the tune easily. Try some other tunes, easy ones at first: "Home, Sweet Home," "The Banks of Allan Water," "Auld Lang Syne." There are plenty of

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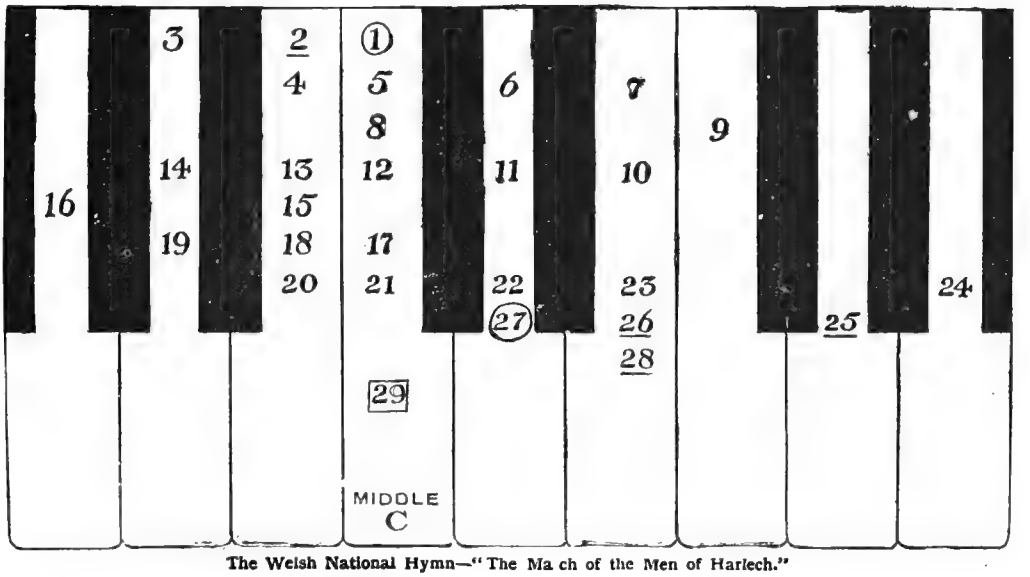


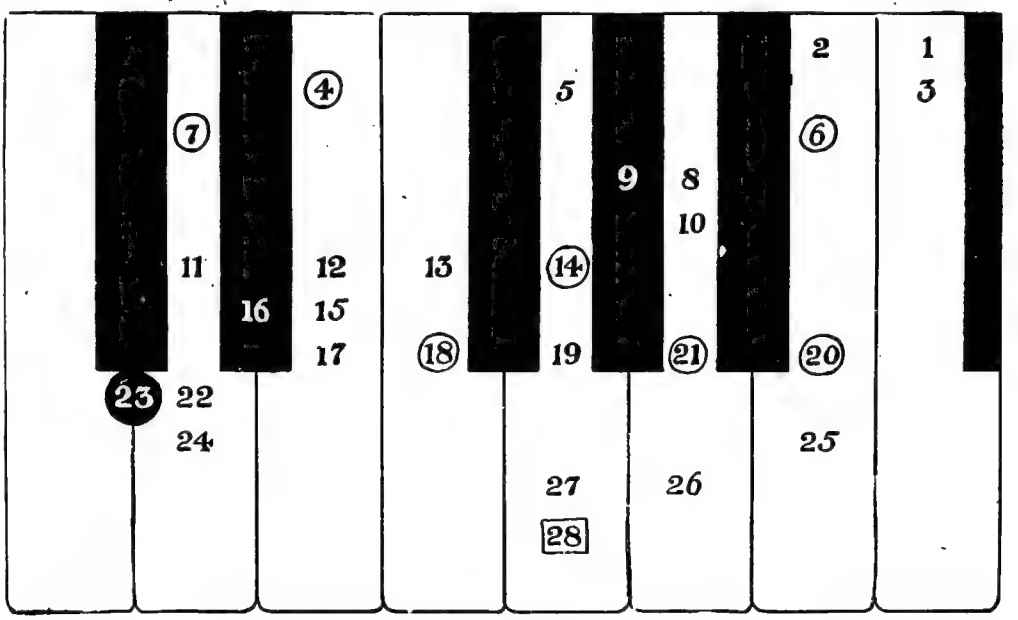
The Welsh National Hymn—"The March of the Men of Harlech."

them that are quite easy to play, and, in consequence, quite as easy to write out.

Now let us think of the advantages that you will all get from this system. Firstly, you will be able to play and sing all the beautiful old songs and hymns that you love so much. That means a lot to many of us. Then you will get your fingers used to the piano, for you must always write out your tunes in numbers on your diagrams yourself, and that means fingering out the notes on the piano.

Soon you will not need the key diagram, but will play the tunes by heart. Then you can give away your diagrams to a friend, and thus all your friends who cannot play at present will soon be able to play quite easily.

There is one difficult little point, but that will not give you any trouble. Some notes



The Refrain of "Venetia," a new song by Signor L. Denza.

"Life is a dream worth dreaming,
Love is a dream divine,
Let us forget to-morrow,
That morning will ever shine."

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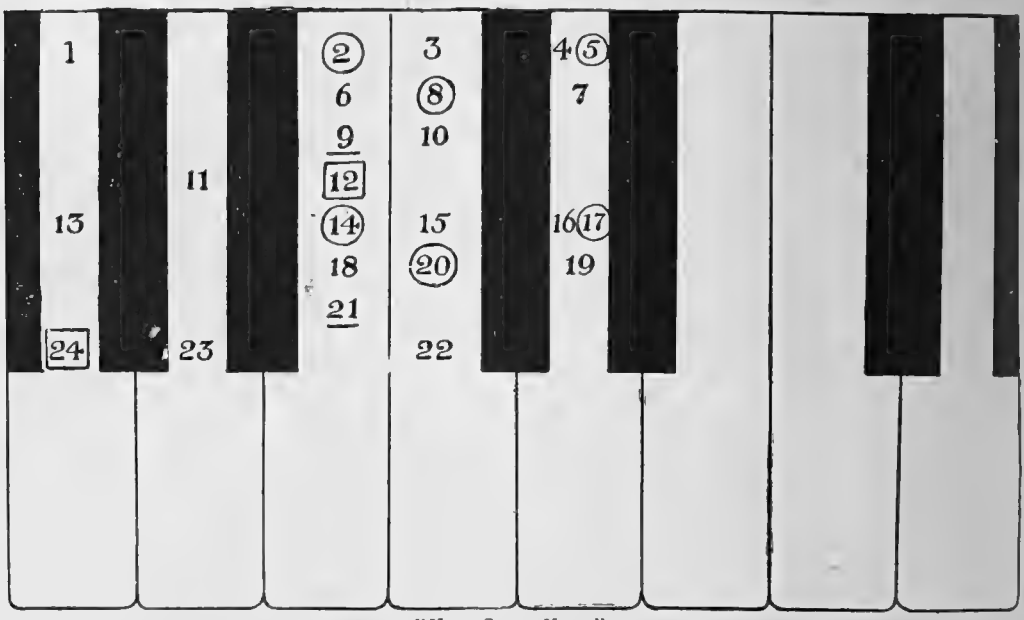
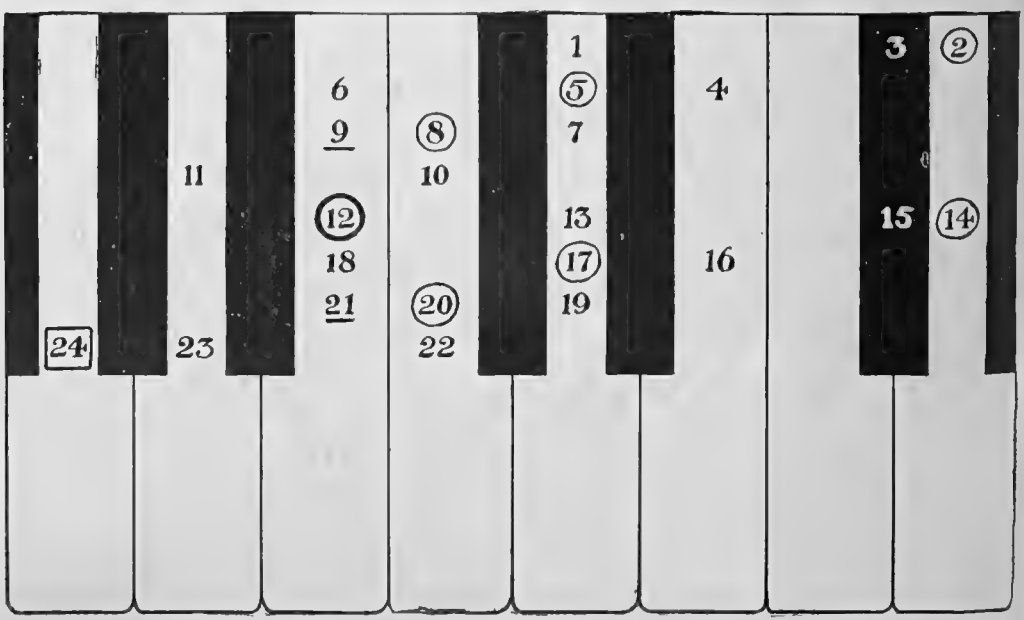


"Home Sweet Home."

"'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam, be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

in a song are longer than the others. On your diagram you may make the numbers for these notes blacker and thicker than the others if you like, to show that they are held on longer. But a better way is to ignore them on the diagram, and simply put the numbers in to correspond with the notes When you have learnt the notes, and can play the tune by heart—then your musical ear will tell you the value of the notes, and you will soon be able to play the tune as it ought to be played quite easily.



"Home Sweet Home."

"A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there, which seek through the world is ne'er met with elsewhere."

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Lady Tellington's "Fun!"

An Episode of a Country House-Party.

By George Williams.

(*From Lady Tellington, at Hightopp Hall, Midshire, to Mrs. Gaston-Smythe at Crampley Mansions, South Kensington.*)

Dearest Eleanor,—You may be surprised at hearing from me after so long has elapsed without my writing, but, believe me, it is only the strenuous rush and round of social existence, and *not* forgetfulness of an old friend and schoolfellow, that has caused my silence.

However, now that I *am* writing, it is to ask a favour!

Will you lend me your dear little daughter for a three weeks' visit? I am having a cheery lot of people down to stay here (mostly young folks—nice girls and eligible bachelors, with just enough of the soberer element for leavening purposes), and it would be *so* sweet to have Ray amongst us!

As it is principally a boy and girl house-party, I *know* you will understand my not asking you and your husband (how is the dear fellow? handsome as ever?), but we hope to see you *both* later on.

Now, I want you to send a wire *immediately* saying that Ray may catch the 2.30 train from St. Pancras next Thursday, and that you will lend her to me till Thursday three weeks. *Don't* disappoint me, because I am expecting several people whom I par*ti*cularly want your little girl to meet. Please excuse this weirdly short invitation, but I *never* make up my parties till the last moment.

Relying on you to grant this request of an old friend, I am, ever affectionately yours,

Eleanor Tellington.

P.S.—By-the-bye, tell Ray not to trouble about an undue amount of "clo" (I know what a nuisance luggage is!), as Mabelle left behind two or three *sweet* evening frocks that were unsuitable for wear in India; and as she and Ray are just about the same size, your dear child will be doing me an *immense* favour by wearing them.

N.B.—Please wire *immediately* and let the wire be "*yes*."

(*From Miss Ray Gaston-Smythe to Mrs. Gaston-Smythe—written in the train* en route *for Midshire.*)

Now, mummy dear, I'm going to write you just a little linelet to say that I begin to miss you already! Now that I've really started I feel shiveringly nervous, and I wish we had taken daddy's advice and wired "No" to Lady Tellington's invitation. Seventeen and a half is awfully young to go away by oneself, and as you've always kept me back so much, I am afraid I shall often fall to the ground during this first flutter of my wings. Oh! do excuse this scribbly scribble, but the train is wobbling horribly. I'd like express trains better if they'd only go slower.

I wonder if they'll snub me, and crush me much, mamma?

Even though we've got very nice far-back blood in our veins, our income and our flat are both quite small, aren't they?

I expect I shall feel frightfully "out of it," among county heiresses whose fathers have crowds of "places," and "boxes," and moors and things! Never mind, my new hat's pretty (there's a nice firm-profiled young man in the opposite corner who keeps looking at it over the top of his paper), so that's all that matters for the moment!

Forgive so much nonsense, darling, but I feel sort of excited with fun and fear.

I'll write to you at the earliest moment after I get there, and tell you if they crush me much, and how I am behaving.—Your most loving little daughter, Ray.

P.S.—I bought a 1s. etiquette book for fun (they are much more amusing than novels to

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read in the train!) while papa was taking the tickets. It says in the chapter on "tips,"—"Fortunately girls are not expected to give as much as are married women." Perhaps, after all, I shall be able to make my £2 5s. last the three weeks. I'll try.

N.B.—The hat-gazing young man has got "Dolf Glenning" on his dressing bag. Isn't it a pretty name? Like the cynical hero, in a nice book with an art linen binding!

(*From Miss Ray Gaston-Smythe to her Mamma—three days later.*)

Hightopp Hall, Midshire.

Oh! mamma!! Yes, darling, that's just how I feel. "Oh! mamma!" expresses it exactly.

I'm having a positively regal time, and if it were not for one or two details which annoy me, I really think my untidy head would be turned right round.

Now I'll try to be lucid, and give you a little account of exactly what's happened (two "n's" or one? I can't remember!). To begin with, the firm-profiled young man who looked at my hat in the train, turned out to be going to Hightopp Hall as well, so we are fellow guests. Funny!

Directly I arrived Lady Tellington met me in the hall, kissed me rapturously, and took me up to my room (such a beautiful room, the *best* one) herself.

"Now, dear little Ray," she said, after we had talked about the journey, and how I have daddy's eyes with your smile, and so on, "I want you to have a splendid time, and to enjoy yourself just as much as a seventeen-and-a-half-year-old girl, with hair the colour of gilded primroses, has a right to enjoy herself."

"Thank you, Lady Tellington," I answered, peeping into the dressing-table glass to see if my hair is really like that. (It truly *is*, mamma!)

"But, dearest," she went on, stroking my hand while I wished she wouldn't, "as you are very young to come away by yourself, I'm going to give you a few 'tips,' as they say in the world of sport. For one thing, keep your own affairs to yourself. I have a special reason for saying this, because one of my guests is indirectly connected with a Society paper, and everything that he hears inevitably gets into print. If any questions are asked you, just say how you've travelled a lot—all round America and so on—and that now you are living with your father and mother, but don't mention anything about the South Kensington flat, or any details concerning your family or surroundings. It's so much the safest way for a young girl!"

"Very well," I replied, feeling a little bit offended, because it looked as if the hostess were ashamed of her guest living in a small flat.

"And," continued Lady Tellington, "I shall always introduce you as 'Miss Smythe,' *without* the 'Gaston'; because double-barrelled names are so terribly laughed at in Society, unless it's in the case of old-established families."

This made me awfully angry, mamma, because "Gaston-Smythe" is our *real* name, isn't it? Papa's people have been "Gaston-Smythes" for ages, haven't they? It isn't as though we were those brewer people in the flat below, who've *invented* a hyphen between Mr. Beere's Christian and surname, and now call themselves "Percival-Beere"!

I suppose I must have showed how cross I felt, because Lady Tellington at once began to make a million more excuses, after which she raved over my "blue-star" eyes, as she calls them, till I really *had* to be amiable again.

So I'm plain "Miss Smythe"!

I miss the dear "Gaston" and the hyphen horribly, but as I'm having such a good time without them, I suppose I must put up with being cut in half!

Well, after Lady Tellington had asked me what frock I was going to wear, she left me and sent her maid to help me dress. I like the maid; she's got such a cheery round face.

I put on the white silk muslin with my blue sash, little turquoise set, and the forget-me-not wreath in my hair, and I must confess, mammy, that I didn't look a bit bad—not a bit.

Then I went downstairs and found myself launched in the sea of Society!

Well, I'll never try to learn to be cynical again, like lady writers; or say that "golden keys" unlock all doors, any more.

The world is a beautifully disinterested place!

A princess couldn't have been made more fuss of than I was—I, a little girl from a South Kensington flat, with £80 a year dress money.

I went in to dinner with Sir Joe Luckley, a younger son who says "What!" whenever there's no need to say it; and the compliments he paid me made me notice things about myself that I had never thought of before . . . He *was* kind.

Then after dinner everyone was the same,

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and more so, Col. Pitcher (quite a funny red-faced thing), Dr. Drymanton (a bishop with thin legs), Count Abitoff (who won't sit in the same room with a Japanese screen), Paul Royter (a comic song singing young man with a nice 'Varsity slouch), Captain Hardupp, Sir Jasper Credytte, and Monsieur de Sansous. They all simply crowded round me and glared at each other.

The sole person who didn't make a fuss of me was Dolf Glenning, and he was really the only one I'd have cared to talk to. I like his face; he looks as if he could be so horrid if he was cross; and men ought to look like that, oughtn't they?

But even though he doesn't trouble about me like the others, he always seems to know what I want somehow. When we were all looking at the moonlight on the lake I hardly knew I was cold myself till I found him putting a shawl round my shoulders, and then walking away!

And, do you know, mamma, the women are nearly as nice as the men!

They rave over my frocks, and say they think it's "so sweet" of me to dress so simply. I can't see why it's "sweet," when I couldn't afford to do anything else, can you?

I can't write any more, as Mr. Glenning has just come into the room. He doesn't seem to want to speak to me, but I must just thank him for going right into the next village to get me a book I wanted.

All my love and kisses to you, mammy, dear.—Your fond girl, RAY.

(*From Miss Gaston-Smythe to Mrs. Gaston-Smythe, four days later.*)

DARLING MAMMA,—It's really getting *too* mysterious!

Nearly every man in the house—with the exception of that irritating Mr. Glenning—has proposed, or semi-proposed, to me!

Can you possibly understand it? *I* can't.

I daresay I'm a nice girl and not bad-looking, but then so are Miss Cleere, Lady Adah Cheltham, Milly Burgess, and the Hortons, and they don't get taken a quarter the notice of. It's beginning to quite frighten me. It almost seems as if it must be some joke, and that they are making fun of me.

Though Mr. Glenning is still kind, and watches me a great deal (it can't be my hat he's looking at when I haven't got one on!), he speaks to me less and less every day.

They all crowded round me and glared at each other.

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Well, I don't care

We had a little dance last night (I wore a wonderful embroidered chiffon over satin that Lady Tellington lent me), and I had no fewer than nine bouquets sent to my room!

Do say what you think is the reason. It is EXTRAORDINARY.—Always your loving

RAY.

(*From Mrs. Gaston-Smythe to Miss Gaston-Smythe.*)

MY DEAREST LITTLE DAUGHTER,—I've only time for a short note as your father is waiting for me to go out, but I'll write more to-morrow.

Yes, darling, all this adulation that you seem to be receiving is very strange. Not that I mean that my little daughter isn't worthy of a great deal of kindness, but it certainly *is* extraordinary for a dowerless middle-class girl to be *fêted* like this.

I'm sorry that Lady Tellington lent you a dress, because, though I can't afford to buy you expensive clothes, I'd rather think of you wearing the frocks I have chosen.

Your dear papa is rather worried. He has just lost £1000 over some speculation, which is a considerable item for people like ourselves, who have a difficulty to keep up appearances.

Another thing that vexes me regarding your visit is the dropping of the "Gaston." I can't bear to think of your being called Miss "Smythe." What Eleanor says is absurd! I haven't told your father, he would be so angry.

I am sending you a small cheque in case you run short, but be economical, won't you, dearest?

We miss you dreadfully; home doesn't seem at all like home without our little girl. Fondest love from us both.—Your loving

MOTHER.

(*Miss Ray Gaston-Smythe to Mrs. Gaston-Smythe.*)

VERY DEAREST OF MAMMAS,—Such an embarrassing thing happened yesterday morning.

The night before I had lent Mr. Glenning the book of poems I was reading, and directly after breakfast he came up to me and said:—

"Thank you, Miss Smythe, for the book. I have a terrible confession to make. There was a letter left inside the pages, and before I knew what I was doing, I had read it. At first I thought it was something you had written out—some comments on the poems—but soon I found out my mistake in a confused sort of way; and, instead of putting the letter down, read it to the end before I had realised the horribly 'outside' thing that I had done. Please, please, will you forgive me? It—it—means everything to me if you will."

And what letter do you think it was, mamma?

Why, the *last one I had from you.*

Isn't it horrid?

Anyhow, though he's found out we "have a difficulty to keep up appearances," he knows that my name is "Gaston-Smythe," which is a supreme consolation.

Of course I forgave him, I couldn't do anything else, somehow; and we've been better friends than ever, since.

He doesn't avoid me any more, and he's told me all about himself. He's a barrister with £800 a year of his own; and then he makes a little, very little, by "barristering," and a little bit more by writing dry sorts of things for papers.

I fancy he has got so friendly and confidential to make up for having read your letter, half by accident.

All the other people are just the same—running after me more than ever. I *can't* understand it. It's rather tiring, but it's very pleasing.

Good-bye for the present, dearest. I must go and dress.—Your own daughter, RAY.

P.S.—(Two hours later). Such a commotion! A new and apparently unexpected guest has arrived—a Miss Smith from America. Lady Tellington seems terribly flustered. I have just seen Annice—the cheery round-faced maid—and she is convulsed with merriment! Things seem strange.

(*Miss Ray Gaston-Smythe to Mrs. Gaston-Smythe—two days later.*)

DARLING MOTHER,—I've only time for the tiniest paper-chat, as I'm off to play golf with Do—Mr. Glenning.

A most extraordinary change has occurred with the coming of Miss Smith. Nobody, except Mr. Glenning, takes any particular notice of me now, and everybody is tittering about "Lady Tellington's little joke!" I can't find out what the joke is.

Miss Smith, a rather common American person, with more diamonds than breeding, seems to be a great favourite already.

I'm very glad to be left in peace, because it gives me more time to be with myself, but I don't quite like being overlooked after its

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being so much the other way.

Only last night—oh! I haven't time to tell you now. Will write to-morrow.

Ever your loving, but neglected, RAY.

(*From Miss Gaston-Smythe to Mrs. Gaston-Smythe.*)

MAMMA, — I understand everything now, and I want to come home *at once*. It's infamous! It's disgraceful! Dolf says it's nearly actionable, how I wish it were *quite!*

This morning Annice — Lady Tellington's cheery round-faced maid — came to my room. She had just had a disagreement with Lady T. about some torn lace, and had given notice.

"And now that I've made up my mind to leave, I'm not going to shield her ladyship any more," she said. "It's only right that you should know, miss!"

"Know what?" I asked.

"Why, know that her ladyship's been passing you off as Miss Smith, the great American heiress, who all these people were invited to meet! Miss Smith, who came unexpected the other night, had accepted Lady Tellington's invitation to pay her a visit, and so my lady (who always likes to get a 'star' at her parties) asked all these people to meet her. But just three days before she was to arrive, Miss Smith sent a wire to say she couldn't come.

"'Oh, John,' said my lady, speaking to Sir John (I couldn't help hearing it all because I happened to be picking up some bits of fluff off the door mat at the time—these housemaids always neglect their duties, and I can't do with untidiness!), 'it will make me look so absurd after telling all these people that they were to meet a millionairess! I must get a substitute. I know! I'll write and ask Ray Gaston-Smythe. We'll call her "Miss Smythe," tell her not to talk about herself, and then no one will know that she isn't my "lion." I'll send a note to Eleanor Gaston-Smythe and ask her to telegraph a reply.'

"And that's what she did, miss; and then when the *real* Miss Millionairess suddenly

I found a quiet place on the golf links where I had a lovely cry.

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found that she *could* come, she (not used to studying anyone's convenience but her own) turned up without wiring or writing. So my lady had to tell everyone that it had been a bit of fun pretending *you* were Miss Smith from Chicago . . . Fun, indeed!"

I couldn't wait to hear another word, mamma. I felt so miserable and humiliated that I ran right out and found a quiet place on the golf links where I had a lovely cry, all by myself, until I happened to meet Dolf. Then, I couldn't help it, I *did* want somebody's sympathy! I told him all about it.

"Yes," he said, "I was taken in with the others; and, if it hadn't have been for your mother's note that was in the book of poems, I should have gone on thinking that you were a millionairess, whom a battling barrister was in honour bound to avoid. However, bless your mother's note! It cleared the way for me!"

I don't know what he meant by "clearing the way," but I felt so glad to think that he was the one person who hadn't given me up because I wasn't a millionairess!

Please wire, mamma dearest, what train I may come home by.—Your loving but humiliated RAY.

P.S.—Since writing I've been for a walk with Dolf. I've found out what he means by "clearing the way." He wants to give me a diamond ring for a birthday present, but can't do so till he's had a chat with papa, he says.

Please wire what time papa can see Dolf, and then what train I can come home by, so that we can all be together as soon as possible.

Give my darlingest love to daddy and tell him that I'm sure he'll say I may have the ring directly he sees Dolf; but, if he *doesn't*, why—well, I've read all about Dorothy Vernon!

N.B.—I really feel grown-up at last, and—oh! mother, mother darling, I *am* so happy! I wouldn't be a millionairess for *anything!*

The Park Seat

(A Drama in Verse.)

HE.

Here, where the ancient trees
  Murmur their pride,
While the mad April breeze
  Greets the Springtide;
Here, on this sheltered seat,
Just for a moment, Sweet,
  Sit by my side . . .

What! You won't sit with me?
  Ah! I know why.
You chafe for liberty—
  Go, then! Good-bye!
Broken our pact and plight,
Never more from to-night
  Darken mine eye!

SHE.

Stop groaning, William, do!
  You'd vex a Saint!
You think I'm tired of you—
  Oh, no, I ain't!
But I won't sit down here—
Why not is pretty clear—
  It's all wet paint!

R. A. HAMBLIN.

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Photo *London Stereoscopic Co.*

Mr. H. Herbert, who tells the story of the Balaklava Charge.

SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS

The Second of a Series of Soul-stirring Stories of British Valour, in which each Narrative is Taken from the Lips of One who Actually Passed Through the Events Described. Here the Famous Charge of the Light Brigade is Set Forth by One of its Heroes, Mr. H. Herbert.

GLEANED AND EDITED BY WALTER WOOD.

No. II.—THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

FROM THE NARRATIVE OF MR. H. HERBERT,* 4TH LIGHT DRAGOONS.

HERE, in brief, is the story of the Battle of Balaklava, of which the mistaken but glorious Charge of the Light Brigade is the most famous incident.

It was October the 25th, 1854. Sebastopol was beseiged by the allied armies of England, France and Turkey, whose base was the seaport of Balaklava. Thirty thousand Russians were posted in the vicinity, and their attempts to relieve Sebastopol by driving the British from Balaklava led to the battle.

The enemy advanced, captured some guns in British redoubts, and attempted to remove them. They were temporarily disorganised by the gallant charge of Sir James Scarlett with the Heavy Brigade. But the guns being still in peril, Lord Lucan, commanding the Light Brigade, received orders to follow the enemy and prevent him carrying out his design.

The Light Brigade then swept into the "Valley of Death," where in a few moments nearly half of them were lost.

"The object of the Russians," Mr. Herbert told me, "was to capture Balaklava Harbour, and so bring about the loss of our base. But the harbour was strongly fortified on the heights surrounding it; and in addition a frigate was moored broadside on at the top of the harbour, so that she was able to sweep the surrounding country with her guns.

"We thought we were to attack the Russians on October 22nd or 23rd, 1854, but we did not do so until the 25th, the day of the charge. Of course our staff must have observed a movement amongst the Russians, whom they could see through their glasses; but to us, with the naked eye, they were invisible. We had been continually standing to our horses, and were doing so during the greater part of the 24th, returning to our camp late at night. It was the custom on active service in those days to turn out and stand to our horses for two hours before daybreak, and on the 25th we turned out about four o'clock. The weather was cold

* Mr. H. Herbert, the narrator of this story of the charge of the Light Brigade, was born at Bristol nearly seventy-two years ago. He enlisted in the 4th Light Dragoons, now the 4th Hussars, and at the age of twenty-one rode in the immortal charge. He left the Service at the end of the Crimean War with the rank of sergeant—a sufficient testimony to his abilities and zeal.

He began business as a builder, and for twenty years was successful. Then misfortune overtook him, and he accepted a post as night-watchman, which he kept until he was compelled to resign it through rheumatism. For ten years he was chairman of the Balaklava Relief Committee, an admirable institution, the head of which is now Mr. T. H. Roberts. It has been the means of rescuing many survivors from the workhouse, and is able to keep body and soul together for them in their ending years. The oldest survivor is seventy-nine years old. Seventeen were on the stage of the Alhambra at a benefit performance on the fiftieth anniversary of the charge. The curtain rose to the strains of "The Boys of the Old Brigade," and fell to the sad and significant bugle-sounding of the "Last Post."

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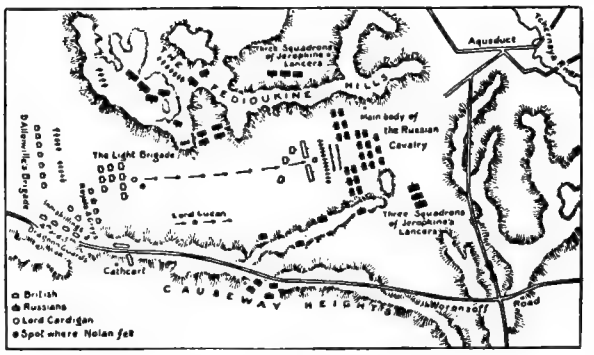
and miserable, and we had slept on the ground under our tents, fully dressed and armed. We had nothing to eat or drink before turning out.

"The Light Brigade was formed up not far from where the charge afterwards took place. It consisted of the 4th Light Dragoons, 8th Hussars, 11th Hussars, and 13th Light Dragoons, all of which are now Hussar regiments, and the 17th Lancers.

"Our pickets suddenly gave the alarm that the Russians were attacking, and we advanced across the plain to the three British redoubts which were the object of the Russian attack. The redoubts were manned by a few British artillerymen and Turks. The Russians abruptly loomed up out of the dull grey of the morning, and immediately shells and cannon-balls were falling amongst us, and screaming over our heads.

"As I sat on my horse I took particular notice of the Russian lines as they advanced to attack us; and I have often thought that they resembled the keys of a piano under the fingers of a clever player. Some of the keys seem to fall out and reappear rapidly; and so it was with the Russian ranks as our artillerymen played upon them—only the keys which disappeared did not come up again. A great many of the Russians fell, dead or wounded, as they advanced.



Plan of the Battle of Balaklava.

"Very soon we found that the Russians had carried the redoubts, for the guns—our own guns—were turned upon us. As soon as the redoubts were taken, we saw the Turks rushing out of them and tearing pell-mell down the eminences and across the plain towards us. I remember how freely our men cursed them, and how little the Turks seemed to care whether they were cursed or blessed. As they flew past they shouted to us, '*Bono, bono*, Johnny!' meaning 'Good, good'—they called all Englishmen in the Crimea Johnny, but our men shouted back, 'No *Bono!*' and swore fearfully.

"The I Battery of the Royal Horse Artillery had already dashed up and gone past us in magnificent style, and had opened fire on the Russians. Shortly afterwards I saw Captain Maude, commanding the battery, carried away to the rear, with either an arm or a leg—I think it was a leg—shattered.

"As soon as our commanders found that the Russians had got our range from the redoubts we retired back upon our own camp, which was towards Balaklava. There was a large plain extending from these redoubts, so that we had a good level surface to ride on.

"We retired, the shot and shell playing on us continuously. The Russians at the same time advanced their cavalry—masses of them, and some of them remarkably handsome regiments, too. Amongst them were hussars dressed in light blue.

"While we were retiring across the plain, the Russians following, the Heavy Brigade, under Sir James Yorke Scarlett, prepared to charge. The Heavy Brigade consisted of the Scots Greys, the Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, the Royal Dragoons, and the 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards. At first the Russian cavalry were galloping down the hill, but the sudden appearance of the 'Heavies' stopped them, and they came on at a walk. Sir James instantly swept on, dashed into them, and with his 600 men scattered 3000 Russians.

"The Heavy Brigade advanced splendidly, and made a grand charge. They went right through the enemy, and at the same time the guns were supporting them with a smart and telling fire. We were a little bit too much to the left to see the charge itself fully; but we could hear the din of the fight.

"If the Light Brigade had dashed on the Russians' right flank and followed up the terrific charge of the 'Heavies' there is no doubt, I think, that we could have annihilated the Russians on the spot. It was a grand opportunity for the Light Brigade; but it was lost.

"After this there was a lull in the fight, and we thought the battle was over. We were ordered to take ground to the left, and reached some rising ground at the top of the valley, where we halted.

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"The Charge of the Light Brigade."

From the famous Picture by R. Caton Woodville.

"We next proceeded to dismount, and stood to our horses for some time. A few men were able to take a snack of something to eat, but only those who had saved part of the last rations issued on the previous day, for on that morning we had turned out in a violent hurry, and there was no time to do little odds and ends of work that had been overlooked.

"For instance, the straps under my trousers were still unbuttoned, because in the hurry of mounting I had had no time to secure them. The riding and galloping about had made me very uncomfortable. There were no jackboots in those days—soldiers are very differently provided for in these times, I can assure you—and my trousers had wriggled up my legs.

"I said to a comrade of mine, a young fellow from Birmingham, named Fletcher: 'Tom, will you button up my straps for me?'

"He willingly obliged, and was just finishing the job when Captain Nolan galloped up to Lord Lucan.

"What passed between Captain Nolan and Lord Lucan I cannot pretend to know, because I was not close enough to hear anything; but at any rate Lord Cardigan shouted: 'Stand to your horses, men! Prepare to mount! Mount!'

"The trumpeters of the different regiments sounded these orders, and we sprang into our saddles.

"The order was then given: 'The Light Brigade will advance!'

"We knew one thing—we knew what was expected of us, for two or three days before the charge Lord Lucan had addressed us, saying: 'Keep your horses well in hand, men, and obey your officers; but when you get in amongst the Russians, *skiver* them well!'

"As he spoke he gave us with his own sword an illustration of what he meant—which was pointing and cutting with the weapon.

"Lord Lucan had previously served in the Russian army. He was a regular fire-eater. Lord Cardigan and he were a well-matched pair in that respect.

"We knew that we were going into something pretty desperate; but we did not realise what was in store for us. Not a soul suspected that.

"The advance began. We had not got more than two or three hundred yards when the Russians bellowed fire from three batteries of guns, with ten guns in a battery. There were ten on our left, ten on our right, at a distance of about a mile, and ten at the bottom of the valley, with their muzzles pointing directly at us. All these batteries were field guns, and very much superior to ours.

"The batteries poured in a fearful fire from these three quarters—straight ahead and on our right and left; and, in addition, there must have been great numbers of Cossacks and infantry in ambush on our right, because from that direction also a murderous fire was coming.

"Rushing into the 'jaws of death' like that our men dropped from their saddles by dozens. Some were wounded, some were killed on the spot, and fell out of their saddles. There were cases of man and horse being literally blown to pieces by shells.

"Soon after we had started, the wild rush of the living men was accompanied by maddened horses with emptied saddles.

"The first man to fall in the charge was the officer who, rightly or wrongly, had brought the order for it—Captain Nolan. He was ripped up the breast by a piece of shell and fell from his horse with terrible cries; but his foot got fixed in the stirrup and he was dragged for a considerable distance. Our own major—Major Halkett—was struck by a shell, or a cannon-ball, full in the chest and killed on the spot.

"Very soon afterwards, my own chum, Tom Fletcher, was shot. He was a brave soldier and a splendid horseman; but the heavy fire was disorganising us, and he got a little behind me in his dressing—that is to say, he was not level with me in the line. I shouted: 'Keep up, Tom!' The words were no sooner out of my mouth than I heard a whizz and a thud, and a bullet which had just grazed me struck him in the back of the head. But he held on, wounded though he was, and fought till he was taken prisoner. He lived for a little while, but died not long afterwards in the Crimea.

"The Light Brigade was advancing in three lines—the 13th Light Dragoons and the 17th Lancers forming the first, the 4th Light Dragoons and 11th Hussars the second line, and the 8th Hussars the third. Lord Cardigan was in command, and led the first line; Colonel Douglas led the second, and Lord George Paget the third. The 17th had lances, the rest of us carried swords, although as light cavalry we had been through the lance exercises.

"From our starting-point to the place where the farthest guns—those at the lower

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part of the valley—were stationed was at least a mile and a quarter; and for the whole of that distance we rode through a perfect blaze of fire. So terrible was the flanking fire on our right and left, that when we had reached the bottom of the valley there were not more than about one hundred men remaining mounted.

galloped up and surrounded them as well as we could with our shattered numbers, and stopped them from going.

"Then the most terrible part of the whole mad business came. The gunners tried to escape from the fury of our men by crawling under the guns; but the drivers had not time to get away from their horses. They were

"Soon after we had started, the wild rush of the living men was accompanied by maddened horses with emptied saddles."

"We literally flew at the batteries; but by the time we got to the guns the first line of the Brigade had melted away. It had been almost annihilated by shot and shell.

"When we reached the battery we found that the gunners and drivers had limbered up their guns and were slowly retreating. We

sabred as they tried to dismount, and a good many of our own men dismounted and struck the Russians under their own guns or routed them out at the point of the sword. At such a time nothing could escape—men had no time to think, and the very horses were cut and stabbed and killed. So far as my

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own recollection goes there was not a man or horse who escaped alive in the whole of the battery.

"Many of our men were fighting dismounted, their horses having been killed by fire or steel. Some of them performed prodigies of valour, amongst them being Sam Parkes, a private of my own regiment. When we were mixed up with the guns Parkes was on foot, his horse having been killed. He was surrounded by Russians, and fought like a demon. In a curious way he got level with his officer, for he disobeyed an order. He was going for a Russian, and for some reason the officer shouted: 'Spare him, Sam!'

"But Parkes was far too busy looking after his own skin, and the Russian had to go. He fought as long as he could, and then had to take his choice between surrender or being cut to pieces. He surrendered and was made prisoner, but not until his sword had been smashed by a shot. The Russians kept him for twelve months, then he was released, and was awarded the Victoria Cross for valour during the fight. For many years he lived at the Marble Arch, where he was the attendant.

"Six Victoria Crosses were given for the charge of the Light Brigade, and three for the 'Heavies'—nine in all. No fewer than three of them went to the 17th Lancers.

"We had captured the guns fairly enough, and for a short time they were actually in our possession; but the Russians were seen to be hurrying up large bodies of troops to rob us of the fruits of our charge. The enemy was seen by our officers.

"Lord George Paget shouted to Colonel Shewell, commanding the 8th: 'We must rally on the Lancers, men!' evidently believing that a body of Lancers had advanced to our support. He was at that time looking up the valley—the 'Valley of Death.'

"One or two of our men, amongst them a sergeant called Andrews, shouted back, 'But they're Russian Lancers!' Then Lord George replied that we must hold together and cut our way through them; and the order was given to go about and retire.

"That, indeed, was the only thing we could do, because it was clear that the handful of men who were still lucky enough to be living could do nothing against the Russian masses who were now in motion against us.

"To stay where we were was to be cut to pieces—and for nothing—inasmuch as we had no supports, and could not take the guns away. As for supports, it was fortunate, in a way, that we were without them; for if they had advanced they would have been served in the same way as the Light Brigade. There would have been no help for it, because the odds were so overwhelmingly against us.

"When we went about we made for the Lancers, whom we now saw clearly enough. They were drawn up in a line right across the valley, not far from the points at which the flanking batteries on our right and left were placed.

"Our horses were utterly winded, and terribly distressed with the galloping and charging down the valley for more than a mile. It was impossible to get them to go very fast; but the remnants of the five regiments obeyed the order to hold together, and went at the Russian Lancers.

"As we came back I saw the officers commanding the Russians waving their swords, as if they were trying to bring the flanks of the Lancers round, so as to hem us in; but they seemed to me either to be afraid to move, or not to know what their officers were driving at. It was, of course, a disgraceful thing that they allowed a single man of us to get back again down the valley. Strictly speaking, not a soul in the Light Brigade should have been permitted to return, in view of the superior numbers of the enemy, their freshness, and our own exhausted state.

"We rushed in amongst them, and there was a renewal of the cutting, slashing, pointing, and parrying of the earlier part of the fight. There was no fancy work, but just hard, useful business, and it fulfilled its object, for we cut our way through the opposing lancers.

"There was a repetition of a savage thing that happened as we dashed down in the beginning—the Russian batteries continued to blaze away even when we were mixed up with their own people, and destroyed friend and foe alike. It was merciless butchery so far as their own soldiers were concerned, though it was fair enough in our case, as we were the object to be destroyed.

"In addition to this artillery fire we had to bear the fire of the hundreds of Cossacks who were hovering on our flanks. Many a man who had gone through the charge in safety fell before the Cossacks' fire.

"The charge had caused us to be scattered and utterly disorganised and separated, so that we retreated pretty well anyhow and as best we could.

"Many a friend was missing, and some that I thought I should never see again were found. There was one amongst them, a

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"We literally flew at the batteries."

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"I did get him through luckily, and when we were safely back I saw him taken off his horse."

member of my own troop, that I did not expect to set eyes on, but I overtook him during our retreat.

"I saw that something was wrong, as he was terribly pale, so I said: 'Hello, Bill, what's the matter? Are you hurt?'

"He said: 'Yes, I am; I'm shot through the foot.'

"'Here, old boy,' I told him, 'you must get out of this. Hang on to the saddle and give me the reins. I'll get you through.'

"I did get him through luckily, and when we were safely back I saw him taken off his horse. He was removed to one of the hospital ships in Balaklava Harbour, doctored, and invalided home. He wrote me a letter afterwards to say that he had heard I had got my first step towards being a general. So I had—I had been promoted to corporal.

"A few lucky ones amongst us got safely back—and a melancholy return it was! Ages seemed to have passed since we charged down the valley, and yet the whole of the desperate business had been done well within half-an-hour.

"We staggered in, some singly, some in twos, and some in threes; and the way we were met and cheered and helped showed how stunned those were who had been left behind, and had seen us going on an undertaking that looked like sheer madness and certain death for every man and horse.

"The fire which had pretty well destroyed us had caused the Heavy Brigade some further losses, as they were on the slope behind us, and in the line of fire. That we should have suffered even more than we did at the finish is certain if it had not been for the action of some French cavalry, who advanced and silenced some of the Russian guns.

"We were back at last—but what a handful! When we turned into our tents at night some of them were perfectly empty, for not a single man belonging to them was alive; while others, which had sheltered twelve soldiers in the morning, now held only two. The camp seemed quite deserted, and the shadow of death lay heavy upon it. Some of our brave fellows were, we knew, prisoners in the hands of the Russians, because their horses had been shot down, they were them-

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selves wounded, and escape was impossible; but most of the missing were dead.

"Between six and seven hundred of us had charged down the valley; when we were mustered for the roll-call it was found that half were missing, and when the final returns were prepared, it was shown that in that charge of a few minutes' duration 247 officers and men had been killed or wounded or were missing, while of the horses 475 had been killed and forty-two were wounded.

"A never-to-be-forgotten night followed the day of the charge. The survivors turned into the tents, exhausted and miserable; but all the same I know that there was not a man who had come out of the charge who thought he had done anything more than his duty, and if the rest of the Light Brigade had been ordered to form up again for another charge not a man would have disobeyed.

"Fully dressed and armed, with horses saddled and picketed to the ropes, we turned into our tents, and lay down to try to sleep. A wild and disturbing thing happened. In the middle of the night we were startled by a terrible shouting and commotion. The officers were halloing, and the guards were shouting 'Turn out! Turn out! The Russians are upon us!'

"We roused up and rushed out of the tents to our horses. As we were getting the bits into their mouths I heard an officer shout: 'By ——, men, turn out, or we shall be cut to pieces!' Almost as he spoke, a hundred or a hundred and twenty horses galloped madly right into our camp; but, luckily, although they were Russian, they were riderless. They were loose horses which had stampeded. All we had to do was to capture them as best we could.

"On the morning after the charge, our men who had been taken prisoners by the Russians were paraded before the Russian general, Liprandi, who spoke very good English. He asked the men if they had had anything to eat, and was astonished when they said they had charged on empty stomachs. He gave them plenty to eat and drink, and saying that he thought they would, no doubt, like to write to their mothers and wives and sweethearts, he had them provided with ink and pens and paper.

"He asked, 'What did you men have to drink this morning before you came down in the charge?'

"They told him, 'Nothing.'

"'Oh,' he said, 'I thought you were all drunk or mad!'

"Then an Irishman said to him: 'By ——, General, if we'd had anything to drink we should have had half Russia by this time!'

"The general laughed and answered: 'Well, my man, if they were all like you, I believe you would!'

"I do not remember the case of the butcher of the 17th Lancers, who, you say, joined his regiment fresh from the shambles, and rode through the charge with his pole-axe; but I can tell you of a case as amazing in its way, and one which shows the brutal discipline of the Crimea period.

"There was a man in our regiment named Fox. When the order to advance was given he was on duty in the camp. He rushed to his horse, rode in the charge, and came safely back. And to what? The cat! He was court-martialled for leaving his post without orders and sentenced to receive fifty lashes.

"The remnant of the 4th was paraded for the degrading and monstrous punishment, and Fox was tied to the wheel of a forge-cart. One of the farriers took a cat-o'-nine-tails and gave twenty-five strokes. At that time, when flogging was in vogue in the army, one man never gave more than twenty-five lashes, then a new man and a fresh cat were obtained.

"When half the punishment had been given, the colonel said: 'Hold! I will forgive you the other twenty-five.' Fox, who was an Irishman, answered: 'Oh, don't. Please, colonel, I don't want to be beholden to you for anything. I'll take the other twenty-five!' The colonel said sternly: 'Silence, sir,' and had him marched off to the hospital marquee. The balance was never given. Fox was a desperate character, and a rough customer to deal with, it was true; but he was a fine soldier, and, considering what he had gone through, his punishment was out of all proportion to his crime.

"After Balaklava we were under the command of the French general, D'Allenville, at Eupatoria. We tried very hard to get the Russians to have another brush with us, but they would never face us again.

"It has always been a disputed point as to whether the trumpets sounded the 'Charge!' or not. The order was, 'Walk!' then 'Trot!' The men found that they were passing through such a murderous fire that they all wanted to get at the enemy as soon as possible. Accordingly they began to gallop, and from the gallop they broke into the charge. But I never heard any 'Charge!' sounded, and other survivors bear me out in this statement."

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The Story of an Heirloom.

By John K. Leys.

I.

In a side street leading off Old Bond Street, a few doors from the main thoroughfare on the left-hand side, there stood some years ago—and probably still stands—a house of a quiet and retiring aspect. Rather narrower than its neighbours, it receded a foot or so from the general line of frontage, as though it were quite willing to occupy the position of a poor relation in that aristocratic neighbourhood.

On the ground floor was a single window, shaded by silken curtains in such a way as to preclude any view of the interior; and beneath them lay a narrow platform of red velvet, upon which reposed a tray with some antique trinkets, and near it a few nick-knacks—a chased silver goblet, a piece or two of old china, two or three minatures, and a bit of old lace.

At this window there stood, leaning on a cane, one April morning, a tall, high-bred looking man, already past the prime of life. His well-cut, well-brushed frock-coat had a tired, faded look about it. His smooth silk hat was of an antique pattern. His white hand closed upon the handle of his stick with a nervous grasp, as he dreamily regarded the objects on the window-sill.

Suddenly he seemed to recollect himself; he stood upright, stepped to the door, which bore the legend, *A. Cohen, Dealer in Curios and Antiques*, and pulled an unobtrusive bell-handle.

The door opened as if of itself, and the visitor, taking a pace to the right, found himself in a small apartment, half office, half shop.

Besides an office-desk and a large green safe, there were a number of tables on which stood china, bronzes, and glass cases containing plate and jewellery.

The owner of the establishment, who had been furtively observing the new-comer as he stood outside, came up, and smiled an ingratiating smile. He had already noticed the shabby frock-coat, and decided that any marks of deference would be out of place.

"Permit me," said the stranger, and taking out an old-fashioned lady's card-case of filigree silver, he produced a card which he handed to Mr. Cohen with the tips of his long, white fingers.

The Jew's manner instantly changed.

"Proud to serve you, my lord Marquis," he said with a shopman's bow.

"I wish to explain," said the Marquis, "that although the title belongs to me, I do not generally use it. I am known in London simply as Mr. Sarmeuse—or Sarmose, as they generally pronounce it. To speak frankly, our family lost nearly all, save honour, at the Revolution, and the fortunes of our house are now at a very low ebb.

"So low, in fact, have they sunk, that I am compelled to part with an heirloom of considerable value. One of my ancestors in the seventeenth century was fortunate enough to do the King, the fourteenth Louis, an important service, and the King desired that he should be presented with a souvenir of value as an acknowledgment. Accordingly, my great-great-grandfather was presented with a ring, set with a magnificent ruby.

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"The gift was made through the King's minister, Cardinal Richelieu, and on that account it has always been known in our family as the Cardinal's Ring. Permit me to show it to you."

The old man leant his stick against one of the tables, and took out a faded leather case wound round and round with narrow black silk ribbon.

"I have been assured on good authority," he observed, "that there are very few finer rubies in the world, and that it is worth at least fifteen hundred pounds. Considering that the ring is a historical relic, it is of course worth a great deal more than that."

Having unwound all the ribbon, the Marquis opened the case and produced a netted silk purse, and from that a tiny bag of chamois leather, from which he took a ring of immense weight. The stone was of the true pigeons'-blood hue, and of unusual size.

The Jew took it, turned it over, scrutinised it through a magnifying-glass, and returned it to its owner with a shrug of the shoulders and a contemptuous smile.

"Imitation!" he said briefly.

"Sir!"

The thin form of the Marquis towered upward till it seemed as though the top of his tall hat would reach the ceiling.

"But this is an insult!" he cried. "My ruby—the Sarmeuse ruby—an imitation! But I have here the papers, what you call the documents, the certificates and attestations. You shall see—you shall see for yourself."

With trembling fingers he undid the clasp of an ancient pocket-book, and brought forth some pieces of parchment with seals attached, and one or two letters yellow with age. It was difficult to understand how such papers could have been fabricated. They certainly looked genuine, and they confirmed the Marquis' story in every particular.

"What did you say you expect for this?" said Cohen, laying down the documents and taking up the ring again.

"Fifteen hundred pounds; and if you find me a purchaser you shall have five per cent. commission."

The Jew grinned in his face.

"Fifteen hundred farthings would be nearer the mark," he said coarsely. But the Frenchman seemed to have decided that

"Imitation," he said briefly.

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it was beneath his dignity to quarrel with the Jew.

"You allow the ring to lie here, where it can be seen," said he, "and keep the papers in your safe there; then perhaps someone more skilled in precious stones and more quick than you are to estimate the value of a historic relic, may see and wish to purchase it. The commission, as I have mentioned, will be five per cent."

"Oh, well, all right," said the Jew, after a moment's consideration. "And your very lowest price is——?"

"My proper price is one thousand five hundred pounds, but I might possibly take twelve hundred."

"All right. But I don't intend to guarantee the genuineness of the stone."

"It is understood—that is my affair, not yours," said the Marquis, drawing himself up. And with a dignified wave of the hand he was gone.

"The old fellow evidently believes in his ruby," said Mr. Cohen to himself, inspecting it carefully once more, "and yet—I am almost sure I have seen imitations exactly like it."

He carried it with the accompanying documents to a friend on the other side of the street—a man who dabbled in genealogy, ancient MSS., and antiquities of every kind This gentleman could say nothing about the value of the stone, but he unhesitatingly pronounced the documents to be genuine, and offered a five-pound note for them, simply as curiosities.

This decided the Jew to make an effort to sell the ring, and he forthwith deposited it in the tray on the window-sill, where it seemed to make all the other ornaments shrink to half their proper size. There the ring lay for nearly three weeks.

"Say, mister; there's a mighty big ring in your window—seems to be a ring for Giant Blunderbore. But the stone looks to me first-class. Let's have an inspection."

The tall, lantern-jawed gentleman who said this in a strong New York accent would have been taken for an American anywhere, even in church. His quick, alert eyes, dark brown hair, and clean-shaven cheeks gave him a look of youthfulness, though he was evidently no longer young.

He had a friend with him, a shorter and stouter counterpart of himself.

"That ring, gentlemen," said Mr. Cohen, as he handed it to the speaker, "possesses no ordinary interest. It was presented by the great Cardinal Richelieu on behalf of Louis XIV. to the Marquis de Sarmeuse, in acknowledgment of his services to the State. Here are documents which tell the story, and which are undoubtedly genuine. The ring was intrusted to me for sale by the present Marquis."

"Seems to me you don't know much about it. What does your man ask for it?"

"Three thousand pounds."

"Great Tompkins! D'ye think I'm a No. 2 Rockefeller? But if your story is c'rect we might make a deal."

Here the second visitor, who had been trying to make out the seventeenth-century French in the documents of title, whispered a few words to his friend, who responded "Right!"

Then turning to Cohen, he said,—"I leave London to-morrow, but if I have time I will bring a friend, who is an expert in these matters, to have a look at your client's ring. Good-day." And the two Americans quitted the shop.

Mr. Cohen scarcely expected to see either of them again; but on the following day the taller of them re-appeared, bringing with him a little wizened man in a loose brown overcoat, with his head plunged in a hat several sizes too large for him.

This person scrutinised both the ring and the accompanying documents in a very careful and leisurely manner. Finally he handed both back to the Jew, and spoke a word aside to his companion.

"I'll give you ten thousand dollars—I mean two thousand pounds—and that's an outside price," said the American.

The Jew concealed his delight, and mournfully shook his head. Two thousand pounds, he said, was not nearly enough. Three thousand pounds was his friend's irreducible minimum.

"Vallard, I must be going," called out the man in the loose overcoat, and the Jew started. It was the name of a wealthy American already famous as a collector of antiques. Such a man, Cohen told himself, would pay three thousand pounds as readily as two thousand for a thing that took his fancy.

"I regret I am not authorised to take less," he began, but the American cut him short.

"All right. Must be off now—good-night," he said; and before the Jew realised it, he was gone.

Cohen made a bolt for his hat, called his wife downstairs to stand on guard, and rushed after the millionaire; but he was too late.

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He could not see the American anywhere, and he returned to the shop ready to bite his tongue for vexation.

It was plain to him that either he had been mistaken in thinking the ruby an imitation stone, or that at least the American believed it to be real.

If only he had accepted the two thousand pounds! That would have given him a large profit, for he never dreamt of paying the owner of the ring more than the minimum price, less commission. Never in his life, he told himself, had he let such a chance slip.

He kept a bright look out for the American, but in vain.

A month had gone by when Mr. Cohen met in Piccadilly the gentleman who had accompanied Mr. Vallard on his first visit to the shop.

He followed the stranger into a restaurant, and having accosted him, learnt to his satisfaction that he was speaking to Mr. Vallard's secretary, Mr. Windle, and that the millionaire had not left England. He was staying at a country house, to which the secretary was proceeding that afternoon; and he said he had no objection to bring the subject of the ring once more under his employer's notice, and let him know that the owner was now willing to part with the jewel at his own price—two thousand pounds.

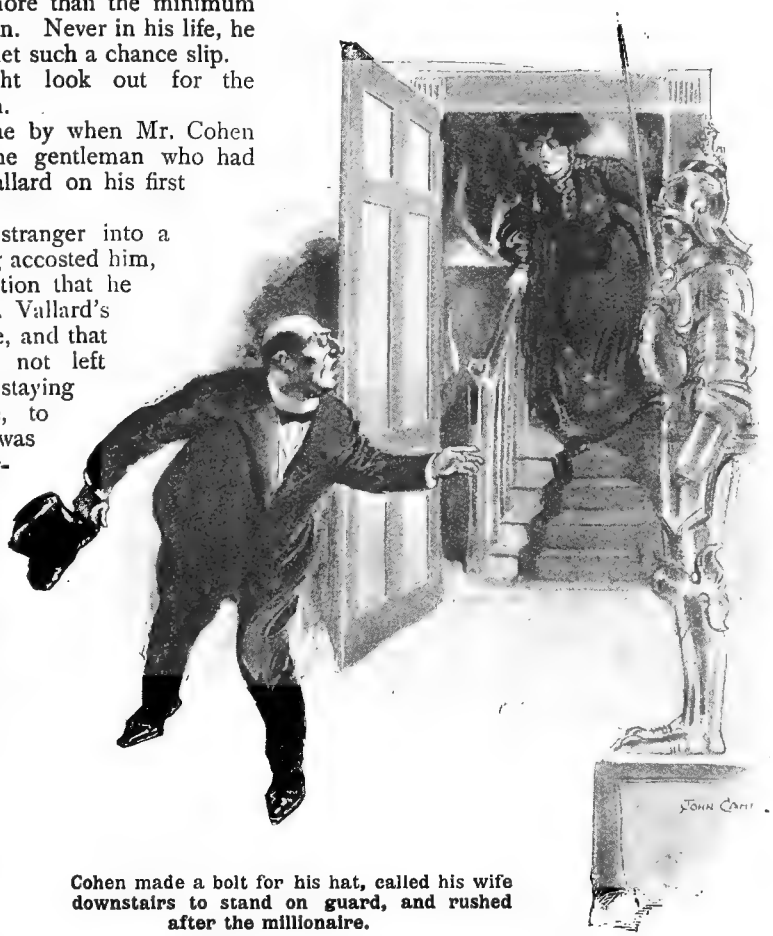
Mr. Vallard, the secretary informed him, would return to London on Wednesday, and leave early on Thursday morning, staying overnight at Claridge's Hotel. If he wished to see Mr. Vallard he had better call there on Wednesday evening.

When Mr. Cohen got back to his place of business, he found the old Marquis waiting for him, accompanied by a girl dressed in mourning, presumably his daughter.

The old man asked whether the ring had been sold, and on being told that it had not, he said he wished to have it back, in order that he might show it to a possible purchaser.

"Oh, that is impossible!" cried the Jew, fearing that if he once let the ring go out of his hands he might never get it back. "I am in negotiation for the sale of the ring to a gentleman who has taken a fancy to it; and I am entitled to keep it until my offer is accepted or refused."

"Well, if your offer is not accepted I must have it back at once," said the Marquis in a dissatisfied tone. "By the way, how much did you ask for it?"



Cohen made a bolt for his hat, called his wife downstairs to stand on guard, and rushed after the millionaire.

Now Cohen had been hoping that this question would not be put. He still entertained grave doubts as to the genuineness of the stone, and if he admitted that he had asked a high price for it, that would be tantamount to an admission either that he believed it to be a genuine ruby, or that he had been trying to cheat somebody.

But the Marquis pressed him, fixing him

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with his eye, and at last the Jew said in an offhand way:

"I said I believed you would take five or six hundred for it."

"Then you acted contrary to my precise instructions, sir!" cried the old man, with sudden fury. "I told you my price was fifteen hundred, which I said might possibly be reduced to twelve hundred, and I forbid you to sell it for less."

"But, my lord, if I had a genuine offer for eight hundred, you would not refuse it?"

"I certainly would."

"Then I fear no business can be done," said the Jew with a sigh.

"Give me the ring, then, and leave me to find my own purchaser," said the Marquis promptly.

"But this is not reasonable!" exclaimed the Jew. "I call seven hundred pounds a very fair price—a magnificent price—for a stone twice as good as yours!"

"That may be. It is not my price," said the Marquis coldly. "Be good enough to give me my ring and let me go."

But this, of course, the Jew refused to do, and he spent a long time in pointing out to the owner of the ring that it would be foolish to refuse a ready-money offer for it, when he might spend months or years in waiting for a better price.

Eventually he persuaded the Marquis to be content with one thousand and fifty pounds, the odd fifty pounds to be deducted for commission, on the understanding that he would be paid in cash.

"Now that suits me," said the Jew to himself, turning his hands slowly one over the other, as the Marquis left the shop. "If the American backs out I am no worse off than before; if he takes it I pocket a thousand pounds, instead of a beggarly fifty."

Mr. Cohen awaited with some anxiety Wednesday morning's post. There was no letter for him, and his hopes sank to zero.

In the afternoon he called at Claridge's Hotel, and to his great joy found a letter awaiting him. It was from Mr. Windle—a mere line, stating that Mr. Vallard was willing to stand by his offer, and would see him at 4.30 that afternoon at the hotel and complete the transaction.

"Mr. Vallard is staying here?" he asked the hotel clerk.

"Yes; he has not arrived, but rooms have been taken for him," was the reply; and Mr. Cohen went away satisfied.

Again the Marquis was waiting for him, his daughter at his side.

"My ring—can I have it?" he exclaimed as soon as the Jew made his appearance.

"I am happy to tell you, my lord, that the ring is sold," said the Jew, with a smirk of satisfaction.

His client's face fell.

"I was hoping—I might have got considerably more for it," he said. "But it can't be helped If you let me have the money——"

"But that is unreasonable!" exclaimed the Jew. "I haven't been paid myself yet."

Again the Marquis' face fell. "When will you be paid?" he inquired.

"This evening," he said curtly. "Call here any time after six and you shall have your money," he added, being naturally glad to get rid of the Marquis and his questions.

Punctually at 4.30 Mr. Cohen called at the hotel.

"Mr. Vallard has gone out," said the hotel clerk, "but he has left a note for you."

"Shan't be back till after twelve, as I am dining out," ran the note. "But there's no need to wait. The hotel manager has my cheque for the money, which he will exchange with you for the ring. You may leave it with him. It will be quite safe."

The manager on being summoned produced a sealed envelope, which contained a cheque on the London and Provincial Bank for two thousand pounds. This he gave to Mr. Cohen, who in exchange handed over the ring with the documents concerning it.

"Well, I expect the expert Vallard called in ought to know, but I can't help wondering whether that stone is genuine," said the Jew to himself as he left the hotel. "Anyhow, it doesn't matter to me. I didn't guarantee it to be genuine, and I don't care whether it is or not. I come out on top whatever way it is."

At the Jew's place of business the Marquis was waiting for him, this time alone.

"You have sold the ring?" he asked with no appearance of anxiety.

"Yes, I have sold it."

"For twelve hundred pounds?"

"No, for a thousand guineas."

"Ah! It is a loss to me. I believe I might have got half as much again."

"Well, the money will be ready for you to-morrow," said the Jew abruptly.

"The money will be paid to me to-night, or the ring will be returned to me to-night," said the Marquis calmly.

"To-morrow, I say!" screamed the Jew. "You can do nothing to-night. The banks are closed——"

"If I am not paid to-night my solicitor

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applies for a summons at Bow Street to-morrow morning," said the Marquis.

"You are talking nonsense," blustered the Jew. "No summons would be granted. I am a respectable man."

"The summons will certainly be applied for, and the magistrate shall know the facts. What the magistrate may do is not for me to say," and with calm dignity the Marquis stepped across the threshold.

The Jew reflected. If a summons were applied for, no matter on what grounds, the facts would come out. The American would see a report of the case, and come forward to say that he had paid two thousand pounds for the ring—or he (Cohen) might be called upon to produce the cheque.

He was not sufficiently well acquainted with the law to know whether he had committed a criminal offence, but he saw it would never do to allow the facts to become known.

He recalled the Marquis and gave him all the money he had in the house, and his cheque for the balance—£650.

The American's cheque was crossed, and it was not till the following day that he received it back from his own bankers, who had presented it. It was defaced with the terrifying legend—"No account—refer to drawer."

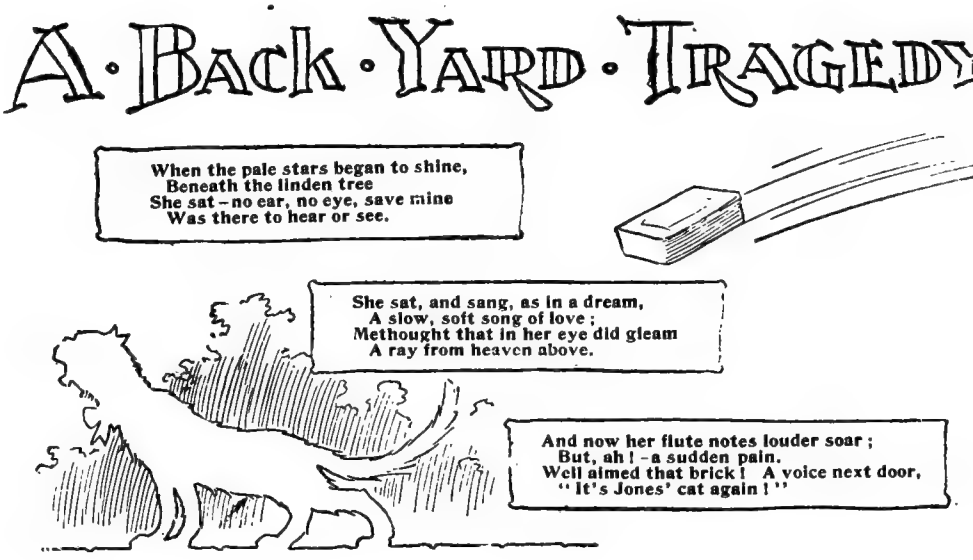
Mr. Cohen nearly fainted. A small glass of brandy revived him somewhat, and he drove to Claridge's Hotel. On producing the dishonoured cheque he was allowed to resume possession of the ring; but, as he had suspected all along, it was an imitation ruby set in a heavy ring of 22 carat gold.

To apply to the police was impossible—he could do nothing without making public the fact of his own attempted fraud.

He engaged a private inquiry agent, who succeeded in discovering that the bogus cheque had been taken from a cheque-book stolen some months before—and that was all.

His own cheque had, of course, been cashed as soon as the bank opened in the morning, and the Marquis has not been seen since in London. Indeed, Mr. Cohen is by no means sure that if he met him he would dare to make any charge against him. How was he to prove that he had any connection with the writer of the bogus cheque?

And yet at the back of Mr. Cohen's mind there lurks a haunting suspicion—that the owner of the ring was an actor of very fair ability, and that, as a matter of fact, the Marquis de Sarmeuse and the American millionaire were one and the same.


A·BACK·YARD·TRAGEDY
When the pale stars began to shine,
Beneath the linden tree
She sat – no ear, no eye, save mine
Was there to hear or see.
She sat, and sang, as in a dream,
A slow, soft song of love;
Methought that in her eye did gleam
A ray from heaven above.
And now her flute notes louder soar;
But, ah! – a sudden pain.
Well aimed that brick! A voice next door,
"It's Jones' cat again!"

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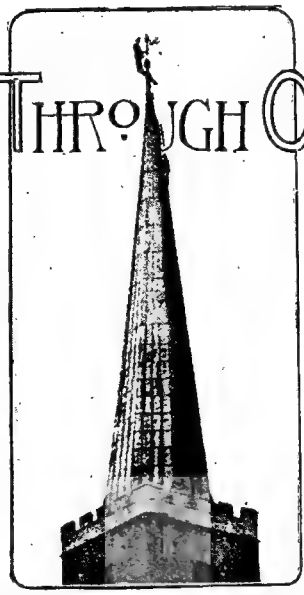
THE WORLD THROUGH OTHER EYES

XIII. — THE STEEPLE-JACK'S POINT OF VIEW.

By B. Wyand.



The writer of this article making a perilous climb. His is the figure to be seen on the right-hand side, almost at the summit of the steeple.

In these Pages a Steeplejack—who Follows One of the most Perilous of Callings—Describes his Terrifying Sensations while Climbing to his Work in Mid Air.

The word steeplejack is usually associated in the public mind with a man who simply builds and repairs tall chimneys; but these works form only a branch of his business, and towers, monuments, church steeples, and many other erections of a lofty nature come within the scope of his undertakings. In the ranks of the steeplejacks, too, are found masons and stone carvers of a high order—as much artists as their brethren who work at lower levels.

Every steeplejack has not the good fortune to be born into the work, although it is essentially a business which runs in families, and descends from father to son; and my own experience was not acquired without a somewhat undue expenditure of nerve force and a succession of quite unnecessary thrills.

My first climb was up the spire of a church steeple, rising some two hundred and forty feet from the ground. From the vane downwards, for a matter of thirty feet, the masonry had been condemned by the architect as unsafe, and it was to be pulled down and rebuilt.

THE TERRORS OF A FIRST CLIMB.

The men are already at work, and as I stand at the foot of the church waiting to commence the ascent, I hear a rattling of frail ladders. One of the men is coming down. I watch his figure emerge from the shadow of the scaffold into the open. Step by step he comes, the ladders clattering beneath his tread—larger and larger he looms, disappears for a minute behind the parapet of the tower, and then, clambering over, comes quickly down the remaining eighty feet, and lands lightly upon the ground.

What has struck me most up to now has been the extreme frailty of the ladders, with their light side-pieces and their rungs of the thickness of an inch and a depth of only an inch and a half. Two hundred and forty feet, I ejaculated, and an inch and a half of timber between me and eternity. I slip, a broken rung, a loose "dog" (iron holdfast), a chafed lashing, and——

Almost before the thought had entered my head I was away up the first ladder, clinging tightly to the side-pieces, and intuitively "sounding" the rungs as I place my feet in turn upon them; but this hesitation does not last long—it is not allowed to—for behind me, swarming up in easy, careless fashion is the climber who has just come down, and I am involuntarily compelled to hasten my steps.

I look up. Endless seems that snaky line of ladders now, and not only endless, but tortuous, and running at critical angles in order to pass the decorative obstacles with which the spire is studded. One ladder, in especial, fascinates me—a ladder with an out-

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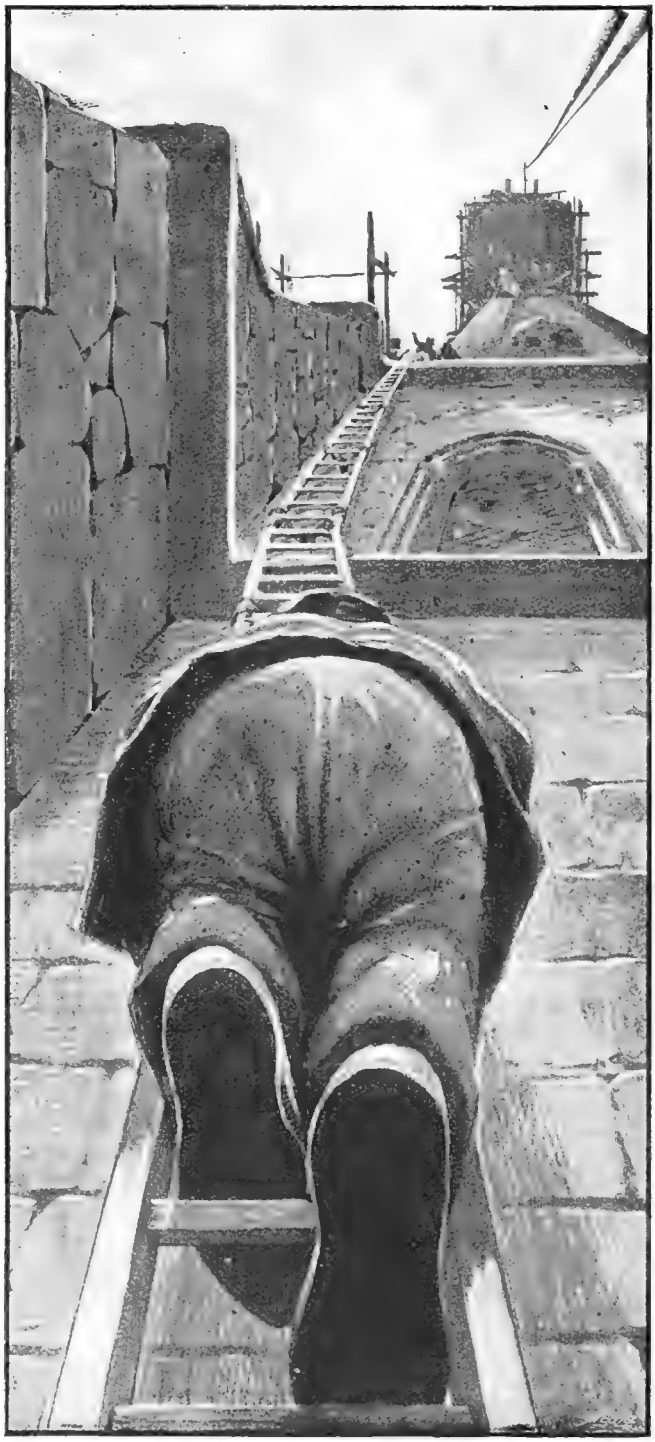
ward throw, necessitating a crawl *with one's back hanging towards the earth!*

Higher and higher I mount, at first with a certain amount of decision, for the thick base of the spire hides the view immediately in front of me, and I refrain from glancing on either side. But now the spire tapers rapidly, and bend my eyes as I may upon the ladders, every now and again the spreading landscape forces itself upon my vision, now on one side and now on the other.

Stop! The man who had passed me whilst I meditated on the tower had gone ahead, and, disdaining such a trifle as a plank thrown across the upgoing of the ladders, had clambered round the obstacle. The spire has become woefully thin at this height, and the seconds pass as hours whilst I wait for a climber to descend from the topmost scaffold on which he is engaged and shift the plank for me.

It is utterly unnerving, this standing still in mid-air, supported on the frail rung of a frail ladder, which in its turn is fixed merely by a rope lashing to an iron "dog" or holdfast driven into a joint of the masonry. My old ideas come back with crushing force. If the rung on which I stand should break, if the "dog" should draw, the lashing fray!

I look around me—at the sky. Horizontally — there is no other view. Then I steal a downward glance, past the rake of the spire, in an oblique direction, allowing my eyes to fall little by little until their line of sight is almost vertical. Below is a long stretch of road, fringed on either side by trees which look for all the world like huge bushes, and beyond them again are roofs, roofs, nothing but



When climbing a church tower behind another man, this is the appearance that the foremost man presents. The height of the tower cannot be gauged save by looking to one side in order to see the scaffolding above. Hold the paper above your head to get the full effect.

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roofs. If I were to fall! I withdraw my eyes and investigate intently the construction of the ladder, calculate the strands of the rope lashings, the thickness of the dogs; but it is useless, for I am fascinated by the view below, and once more I throw my eyes downwards. There is a crowd of people standing there now in the roadway, their figures squatted into a black patch, with an upturned white spot for face.

The plank is moved, and again I essay the heights. It is an easy matter now, encompassed by the scaffolding, with planks at every stage; and with one final pull I emerge, hot and perspiring, arms and legs aching, upon the topmost platform—sheer above the vane, with nothing between me and illimitable space.

I would give worlds for something to hold, were it only a swaying rope or the projection of a scaffold-pole; but I stand alone, shuddering and shrinking in dire sickness of spirit, physically unable to move a limb.

The light scaffold—it is two planks wide here—sways suddenly from side to side, and the world at my feet, upon which I have not yet dared to look, seems to rise and encompass me—hills piled upon hills, and above all the vast blue dome of the sky.

It is only the man at work on the scaffold below; but the shock has served to reassure me, and, the swaying motion over, I contrive, with many a longing grip at nothing, to steady my nerves sufficiently to look around. At first, as when upon the ladder below, I keep my eyes steadfastly in a direction almost horizontal, then, little by little, as assurance comes, I allow them to sink slowly downwards towards the earth so far below, until they strike the horizon. From here the descent to the surrounding landscape is accomplished by a comparatively easy transition.

Immediately beneath me now, but hidden in part by the projecting bulk of the square tower, lie the roofs of the cottages, their gardens clearly mapped out. Houses are strangely squat and warped, and roads wind like white ribbons, with here and there a black blotch for a human figure; whilst away into the distant haze of the brilliant sunshine runs an endless succession of fields and hedgerows.

I am recalled by the voice of one of the men to my position on the swaying scaffold and the two hundred and forty feet have now to be descended—an easier task than the one just accomplished.

THRILLING WORK IN A STORM.

For the past twenty-four hours the gale has blown without intermission, and as evening descends once more, the wind, intensified threefold, is accompanied by great sheets of driving rain. It is six o'clock, and offices and warehouses are turning out their crowds of workers, to battle home as best they may amid the tempestuous fury of the elements.

Aloft in the wilderness of spire and chimney, amid the tangle of crossing and intercrossing telegraph and telephone wires, the winds raged uncontrolled, whilst the rain drifts in great slanting masses sheer across the city, lashing the face like whipcord, and blinding the eyesight as it strives to penetrate the incircling gloom.

We have work this night—work that would appal the stoutest-hearted—work that brings a thrill into the heart and the blood into the face of even the hardened climber. It is only a trifle of a couple of hundred feet, rising in a brick column from the yard of a generating station; and it must be climbed to-night, beat the storm as it may.

Throughout the day, when, owing to the strength of the wind, work has been impossible, fears have been entertained for the safety of the light scaffolding fixed round the cap of the shaft; and now, with the intensifying fury of the gale, it has been deemed advisable to overhaul this frail combination of poles and planks, and to supply such extra lashings and ties as may seem necessary upon inspection. Up the shaft, from base to cap, runs only a single line of ladders, fastened in the ordinary way with lashings to iron holdfasts driven into the brickwork.

Night has descended all too rapidly, and we must bestir ourselves or darkness will come upon us at our work, and the danger and toil be tenfold increased.

In the shelter of the huge sheds the violence of the gale is but little felt; but, once above these, its full strength bursts upon us, and we huddle ourselves tightly against the quivering ladders, which shake and pull as though instinct with life and determined to throw us back into the black nothingness beneath.

Every now and again a gust, stronger than its fellows, forces us to lie still, crouched clingingly to the woodwork, one foot thrust through a rung; and then, its velocity momentarily lessened, we swarm up a ladder or two, fighting every inch of the way, the giant mass of brickwork swaying (it appears to us) as though every moment it would break in two. Once the foothold of the man above

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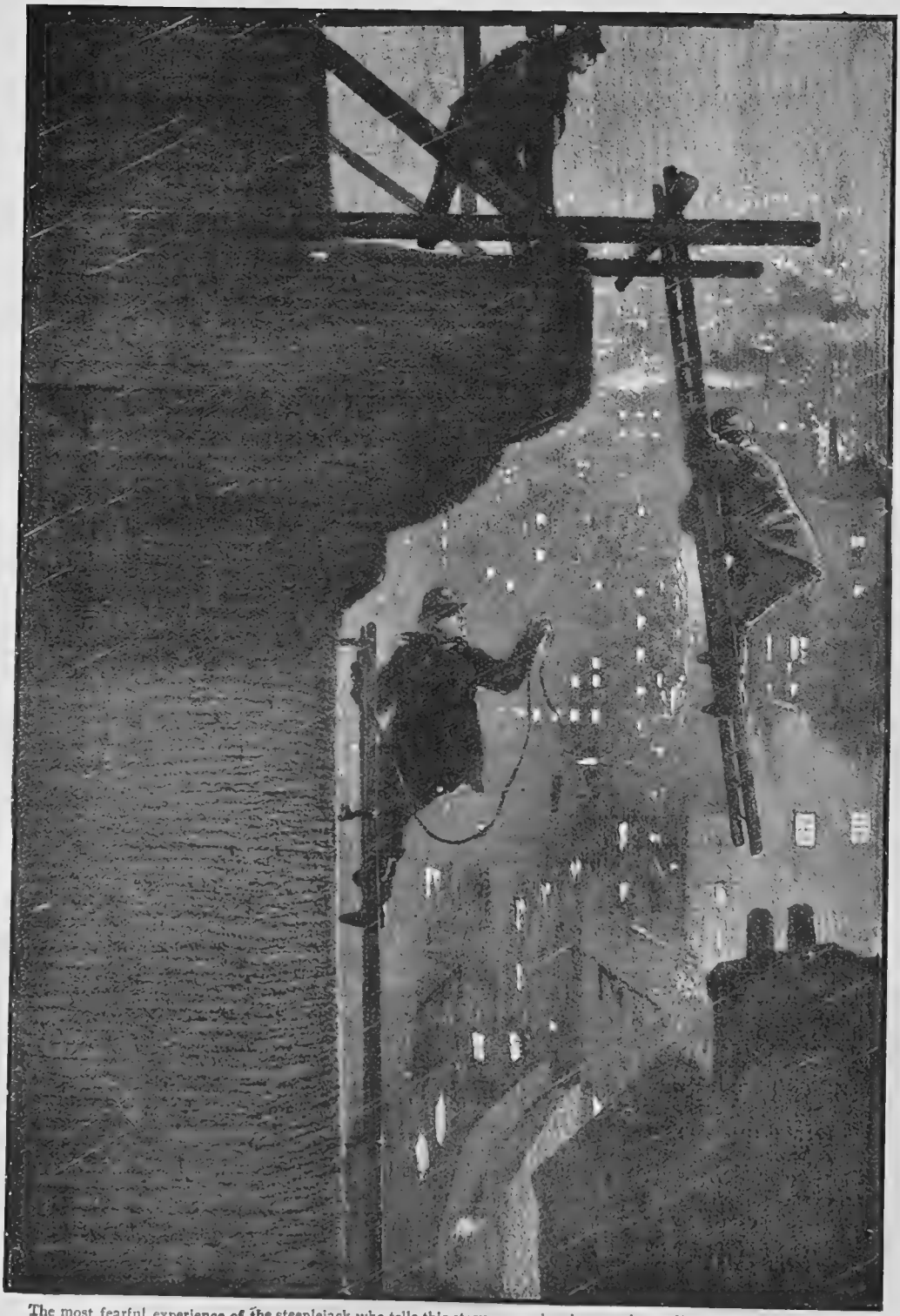

The most fearful experience of the steeplejack who tells this story, was when he was descending from a 200ft. chimney in a terrific gale; the ladder became unlashed at the foot, and for some minutes, until it could be secured, he swayed to and fro at the mercy of the storm.

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me slips from the treacherous rain-slimed rung, and I hear his gasp as he clings for dear life to the bending side-pieces; then we are again a-swarm, our bodies silhouetted blackly against the black-grey of the thickening gloom.

Atop there is a great overhanging cornice to crawl round, with a ladder set backwards at what seems an abnormally acute angle with the horizontal. We are at hand grips with it now, hanging suspended whilst a furious blast of wind and a driving squall of rain beat upon our bodies. They have passed—a long swing, and, surmounting the cap, we stand, an exhausted trio, upon the swaying scaffold.

Below, in the yard, we have left a man, and now, with the aid of the service tackle, we haul up the lashings and ties, which he places in the slings. It is a perilous job, standing there pulling for dear life upon the rope; but, one by one, the necessary ropes and timbers are hoisted up and deposited close in to the brickwork of the shaft. From below comes the voice of the man, in strident, raucous tones; but we, shouting in reply, feel that our cries are carried away on the wings of the gale, never to be heard by man on earth.

Throughout the tedious operation, the scaffold swings endlessly from side to side, quivering into steadiness under a stronger blast, and then drifting once more into its uncertain, pendulum-like motion as the wind sweeps by and runs shrieking and moaning into the gloom enshrouding the city as a pall.

Below are a thousand glimmering lights, twinkling like the stars of an inverted sky; and upward there travels the ceaseless hum of traffic, with, now and again, the shrill shriek of a railway-engine whistle, or, between the blasts, the cry of some newsboy vending his wares in defiance of the elements.

It has grown dark now, so dark that we can barely do more than discern each other's forms, and it is necessary to feel the scaffold carefully with the feet and crawl in a crouching attitude from pole to pole. A lashing here, a lashing there, a tie from right to left, one from left to right—the work is half done, and we clamber perilously around the circular wall of the shaft to the other side. Here the operation is repeated, amid the never-ceasing sway and swing of the scaffold and shaft, with ever and again a sharp, short pitch, like the toss of a cutter in a choppy sea, or a long vibrating thrill as the force of the wind grips the planking and holds it firmly within its clutch.

At last we stand huddled together on the overhanging cornice, ready for the descent, and one of the men swings off into space. The first ladder, owing to its outward throw, necessitates a downward crawl with one's body at an angle to the vertical and one's face looking upwards at the sky—to a novice a most nerve-destroying operation, to the climber an everyday incident of his work.

The man has disappeared, swallowed up beneath the projecting masonry, and it is now my turn. Hardened by long practice, I swing carelessly off, gripping a rung with my foot, and holding on to the short side-pieces of the ladder which run above the cornice. I am halfway down the ladder, against which my body is pinned by the force of the wind, when suddenly, without a minute's warning, I feel myself projected outwards into space, the ladder to which I am clinging for dear life, plunging and rearing in the gale like an untamed horse.

I realise in an instant what has happened. The lower lashing which held the foot of the ladder to the brickwork has given way under the strain, and I am hanging now suspended merely by the one top lashing.

Tighter and tighter I grip the side-pieces, driving my very nails into the woodwork, and I intertwine my legs between the rungs; and then, at a lull in the storm, the swing of the ladder grows less, the jerky motion ceases, and I hang perfectly plumb—above me the edge of the cornice sharply defined against the grey sky, below me the thousand and one twinkling lights and the din of the busy traffic.

I shout to my mate above; but he has already realised my peril, and his voice echoes back in reassuring tones, which fall upon my ears as though from miles away.

Twice does a fierce squall hurl me swinging and eddying into space, and twice, its violence past, do I hang motionless, sick and giddy with fear and apprehension. I picture the lashing fraying strand by strand, chafed yarn by yarn against the rough edge of the masonry, and then I seem to feel the sickening "drawing" of the last threads and the mad downward rush on to the paved yard below.

I am at peace once more, suspended like a plummet in mid-air. I could sleep in this pleasant calm, rocked gently to and fro with a motion like the swing of a vessel riding at anchor; and I lay my throbbing forehead upon the cool wet rung, and glide off for a moment or two into a merciful unconsciousness of my terrible position.

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A sharp, stinging blow awakes me, and I am back on that swaying ladder, every nerve in me vibrating with terror. Again the stinging blow, and there ahead of me, pressed close up to the wall of the shaft, I can discern the white face of the climber who had descended first, and who has now returned to my assistance.

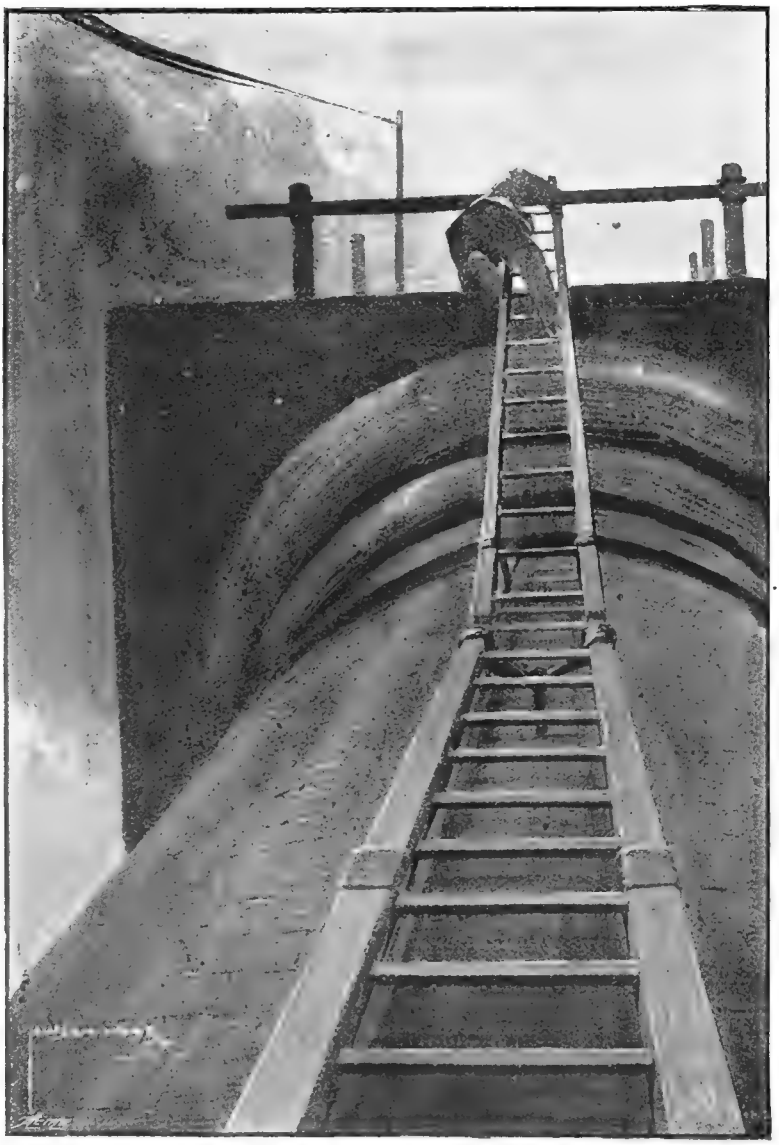
His rich flow of language recalls me to myself with better effect than could a volume of prayer and protestations, and the next time the line strikes me I release one hand and grip it. It is fast to the side-pieces—not knotted, for I have no power left in me to do that—but taken once round the ladder, and the end twisted around my hand.

Little by little, very steadily, he draws the ladder in to him, fastens it temporarily to the one he is standing upon, and bids me gruffly descend.

For the moment I am seized with a fear ten times greater than that I experienced when hanging in mid-air; but his choice stock of expletives comes again to my aid, and I am enabled to release my deadly grip and clamber laboriously down.

A couple of ladders lower I stop, bending my head to a furious gust and listening wonderingly to the sharp impact of the climber's hammer as he drives an extra dog into the brickwork to take the improvised lashing with which he swung me in, and to render the descent of the other man doubly secure.

At last I hear his hoarse cry of "Righto!" followed by a clatter of boots above me. Breathlessly I look upwards, watching my mate as he clambers down that ladder with the outward throw, and I give a great sigh of relief as I realise that he has passed it in safety.



Surmounting the overhanging cornice of a tall chimney in a violent gale. The last ladder is set at an acute angle to the horizontal, so that the steeplejack climbs with his body almost parallel with the ground.

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The Greatest Saint on Earth

An Account of a Gigantic Statue to be Seen in Italy.

By Stanley White.

The back view of the monster, showing tourists ascending to the figure.

Hard by the Lago Maggiore, one of the loveliest of Italian lakes, there is a statue so colossal that it deserves the title of the eighth wonder of the world. Seventy feet in height, it rests on a pedestal measuring forty-two feet, 112 feet in all. The figure is that of the celebrated Cardinal, Count Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, who died in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Crowds of tourists go to see this marvellous statue every year, and a few of the more venturesome penetrate into the interior and work their way, at some hazard to their lives, to the head of the Saint, and even recline in the hollow of his nose as in an easy chair.

Close to the statue there is a church and seminary, also in honour of the Cardinal. And so curiously has this church been placed that, notwithstanding that the colossal figure rears itself for more than a hundred feet, not a glimpse of it can be had by the visitor until he first arrives at the church door. The purpose of this is evident—the tourist is expected to enter the church and offer a prayer before satiating his curiosity. A walk round the church brings you face to face with the mountainous mass of hollow metal. The effect is startling in the extreme, and very beautiful.

Though the head of the Saint is in itself as long as the body of the tallest man—about six feet six inches—the features are proportioned with such genius that their harmony is perfectly preserved and the general effect is one of ineffable sweetness and grace. If you decide to explore the vitals of the colossal statue, it must be under the guidance of a cicerone, who awaits you at the base.

He led the writer to the monstrous boots of the figure, each of the size of an ordinary table. This proceeding is one not usually allowed and is attended by no little difficulty and some anxiety, it being necessary, in order to maintain one's footing, to cling firmly hold to folds in the copper garment, vast enough to shelter a regiment. Then, it was noticed that every fold of the garment, and every section of the mass, was cast and shaped separately. What consummate labour and skill must have been required to preserve the harmony of the whole.

Crawling back the cicerone showed the way to the entrance, himself disappearing for a few moments for a preliminary examination.

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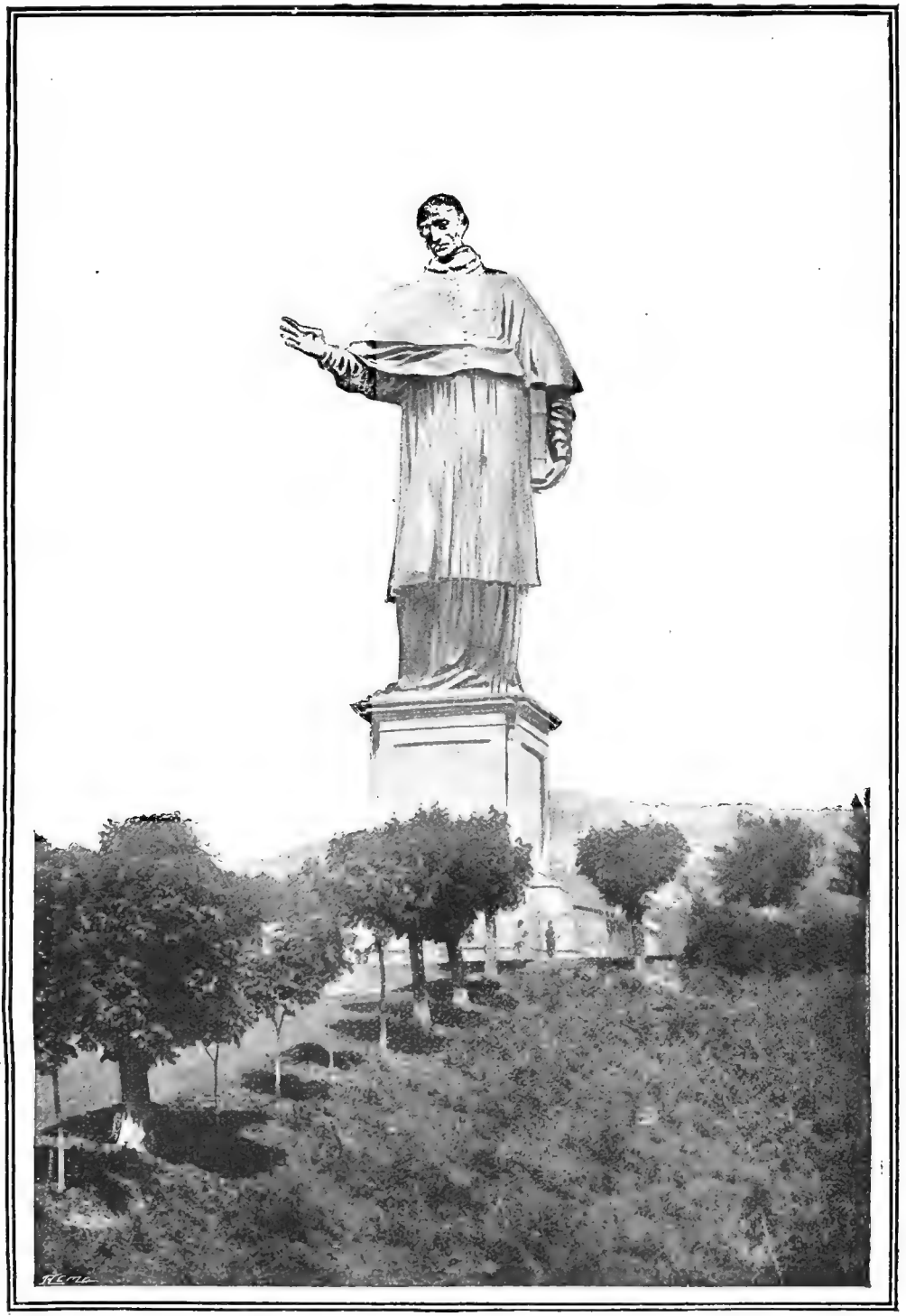

A front view of the colossal statue. Note how pigmy-like the figures standing at the base appear.

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"The sun has been on him," he remarked, quaintly, on his return, "and you could bake bread in his breast." Bidding the tourists divest themselves of their coats, he beckoned them to follow him into the interior. Immediately inside the door a ladder starts, which, being fairly well lighted from the open door, is comparatively easy of ascent. Where the ladder ceases, the hard work begins, for the ascent is narrowed by infinite ramifications of girders, stays, and masonry masses; for even the giant's equilibrium would not be proof against the high wind without such defences.

From the knees to the chest the ascent is made almost in complete darkness by means of slippery iron cross-stays, negotiated by hands and feet. It is just here that the climber half repents his temerity and wishes himself well outside this terrible prison, breathing the pure air of the plain.

But at length the cicerone is able to give a hand from above, and the Saint's enormous bosom is reached. Here is a window which commands an overwhelming vista of lake and plain, and mountains topped with snow. But all at once the cicerone disappears. Where can he have gone? A little while and he emerges, smiling, from the cavernous recesses of the Saint's right arm, which is braced to the central mass with a wilderness of girders. The fierce sunlight from the window strikes strangely upwards through the neck on to the interior of the vast six foot face. Still higher, and with great labour, the tourists continue to climb until they reach the goal of their ambition, the capacious armchair, formed of the hollow of the nose, through whose monstrous copper nostrils one can see the pitiless, hard ground, more than a hundred feet below.

It happened on this occasion that one of those sudden storms arose which so frequently occur in this district. At first the tourists congratulated themselves upon being so well protected from the raging elements. Soon this feeling gave place to one of fear The rat and bat-infested hall was strangely lit with the flaring flashes of lightning, while the heavy roll of the thunder seemed to threaten the frail, hollow monster.

Slowly the descent was made, and without accident they reached the exit. Nature once more smiled, the warm sun drove the cloud masses from many peaks, and with the feeling of intense relief, allied to one of pleasure, not to say triumph, at having passed through so memorable an experience, the travellers made their way down the hill to their hotels.

Tourists seated at the foot of the statue, from which a magnificent panorama of the surrounding country may be seen.

This great monument of religious devotion naturally cost a great sum, over £50,000. It is entirely of copper, and the dimensions of the various parts stagger the imagination. Round the head the Saint measures eighteen feet six, the nose is about thirty inches, the ear twenty-five inches; each eye is eighteen inches wide, and the mouth twenty-seven. The length of the arm, extended, in the act of blessing, is about twenty-seven feet, and the book under the arm is over twelve feet high, the hand is three and a half feet wide, the thumb being about thirty-six inches in circumference.

The statue took many years to complete. One misfortune after another occurred, and it seemed as if Fate had ordained that it should never be finished. It was commenced in 1624, and work was suspended five years later owing to a visitation of the plague. Two years later the originator of the idea, Cardinal Borromeo, the uncle of the Saint, died, and then came wars and upheavals. Work was resumed in 1635 and was then at a standstill until 1690, and on May 9th, 1698, the Saint's nose was riveted on and the vast statue blessed and inaugurated by Cardinal Frederico Caccia.

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JEFFERSON'S HUMAN MOUSE TRAP

A School Adventure.

By Guy Pocock.

It seemed to Jefferson that the human mouse-trap had been reserved for him to discover; if it hadn't been reserved for him, how was it that nobody had found it in all those years?

It happened in this way.

Jefferson was keen on blackberries; and as he often remarked, Baines didn't seem to have the slightest objection to them either. The great blackberry clump at the end of the field was annually picked bare to a depth of thirty feet, beyond which no one ventured till Jefferson invented the new way in.

"All you have to do," he explained, "is to squirm along with your blazer over your head——"

"And land in an adder's nest," suggested Baines.

"Adders' nests be blowed," answered Jefferson, "if you'd suggested a Troglodyte's nest now——"

"I'm not so frightfully keen on being bitten to death by any of your beastly insects!" Baines interrupted.

"A Troglodyte isn't an insect," Jefferson explained with a superior smile; "I don't know *exactly* what it is, but it's the sort of thing you expect to find in the middle of things."

And in they went.

"I hope you're often going to stop short like that without any warning!" shouted Baines as his head came into violent contact with Jefferson's boot; "I thoroughly enjoy being kicked on the forehead, and I only hope to goodness it hasn't hurt your boots!"

"Well, I'm not going to dash over a precipice to please anybody, let alone you!" retorted Jefferson. "I can't see, because this abominable blazer won't come off; but as far as I can feel, I've got hold of some bottomless pit or other!"

Then Jefferson got his blazer off, and uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"What on earth is it?" he cried. "Have you ever seen anything like it?"

"Never seen anything like it!" panted Baines. "And what's more, I don't see much prospect of ever seeing anything like it, with my head tied up in a sweater and blackberry branches wound round my throat, and thorns simply ruining the jugular!"

Then the seam split suddenly and his head came through. Right before them was an oblong pit thickly matted with undergrowth and faced with brick, in the middle of which loomed the top of a huge water-wheel.

"Probably one of those wheels they used to break people on," Jefferson suggested. "If you climb down into the pit you'll probably find any amount of traitors and things, all broken."

"I'm not so awfully keen on broken traitors, thanks," Baines protested. "Anyhow," he added, "it's no good having it there if we don't make it go round; jolly well round, too!"

But the blackberry shoots had grown densely round the axle, and though Jefferson tugged at the spokes and Baines stood on the water-boxes, the wheel refused to budge.

It was then that Jefferson began to cut

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away the blackberry strands with his pig-sticker.

He explained afterwards that it had come as an inspiration; he was simply moved to do it; he never thought of Baines being on the wheel.

For with a sudden rending sound the great wheel ripped away the remaining strands, and Baines found himself sinking gently into the pit. In some alarm he stepped on to the next water-box and then the next; but the wheel settled down into a good swinging pace, and soon Baines was running hard and steadily, without making the slightest progress towards the top. Then he got frightened and began to shout, and the more he shouted and the harder he ran, the more Jefferson laughed, till the tears ran down his face.

But soon Baines was panting hard, and even Jefferson began to feel uncomfortable, and shouted to him to jump Then Baines sprinted, gained three steps, and flung himself gasping on to the side of the pit.

Jefferson was beastly sorry, but he simply couldn't help laughing, to see poor old Baines fairly flying up the wheel like a blooming dormouse, and shouting, and—oh, lor'! And Jefferson became quite weak.

"Of course," Baines began with the utmost dignity, "of course I don't care in the very slightest about risking my life to amuse you. In fact, I should be only too glad to at any time——"

But Jefferson's laugh was infectious, and it really must have looked rather funny; and in another moment Baines was speechless too.

Jefferson broke the silence at last.

"I would give worlds," he said, "I'd give my pig-sticker to see old man Duckett on the human mouse-trap—old man Duckett simply galloping up the wheel, spectacles and all—oh! it'd be too rippin' for words!"

Baines sat up and looked at his watch, then he grinned at Jefferson, and Jefferson grinned at Baines. Without another word they set off by the way they had come, reached the football-ground, and encountered the unsuspecting Duckett, who was solemnly engaged in swarming up a goal-post.

"Old man Duckett!" Jefferson began, "if you'll come off your perch and take your dying oath not to tell anyone, me and Baines have got a secret to tell you!"

Old man Duckett got off his perch.

"The fact is," Jefferson went on, "there's a torture-chamber in the blackberry clump with a 'scavenger's daughter' like the one in the 'Tower of London,' and a rippin' wheel for breaking chaps on: and what's more, the boxes on the wheel are absolutely chock full of hidden treasure!"

"All you have to do," said Baines, taking up the thread, "is to stand on the wheel and fairly hand out the treasure!"

Now, Duckett was one of those boys who can never tell when they are being "had on," and hence, as Jefferson neatly expressed it, "he came as a boon and a blessing to men."

In another five minutes they had carefully explained the glories of the human mouse-trap to old man Duckett, who stared in open-mouthed astonishment.

"Now, if Duckett's quite ready," Baines suggested at last, "we had better be pushing things through, as Duckett'll have plenty to do before it's finished."

"Plenty to do," Jefferson agreed, "and rattling good exercise, too!"

Duckett was quite ready, thank you, only he wasn't quite sure what was wanted.

"All you have to do," Jefferson explained, as they scrambled down to the mouse-trap, "is to stand on the wheel and hand out all the hidden treasure you see, while we hold the thing steady."

"It's empty!" cried Duckett, clambering on to the wheel and peering into a water-box. "Somebody must have been at it!"

"Rum thing," Jefferson agreed. "You must have got hold of the one box there doesn't happen to be any treasure in. A pity, that."

"Never mind," said Baines cheerfully; "we'll move the wheel round a bit, if you'll just walk up it."

Stop it? Jefferson was most beastly sorry, but he couldn't stop it.

"And hang it, you know, *I* didn't make the wheel," he protested. "All you have to do is to run. You'll soon get used to it. Yes, that's the way. Beautiful! Rippin'! A bit faster, perhaps, or——"

But Jefferson could not go on; it was too absolutely killing. The two tormentors simply lay on the bank and shook.

Then Duckett began to scream, but not as Baines had done. Duckett screamed in deadly fear.

Baines stopped laughing, and glanced anxiously at Jefferson, who had sprung to his feet with a gasp; for Jefferson had heard a drowning man cry out, and he knew that cry.

Duckett had not half the physique of Baines, and as the wheel gained upon him little by little, he was sinking lower and lower into the pit. The two boys snatched

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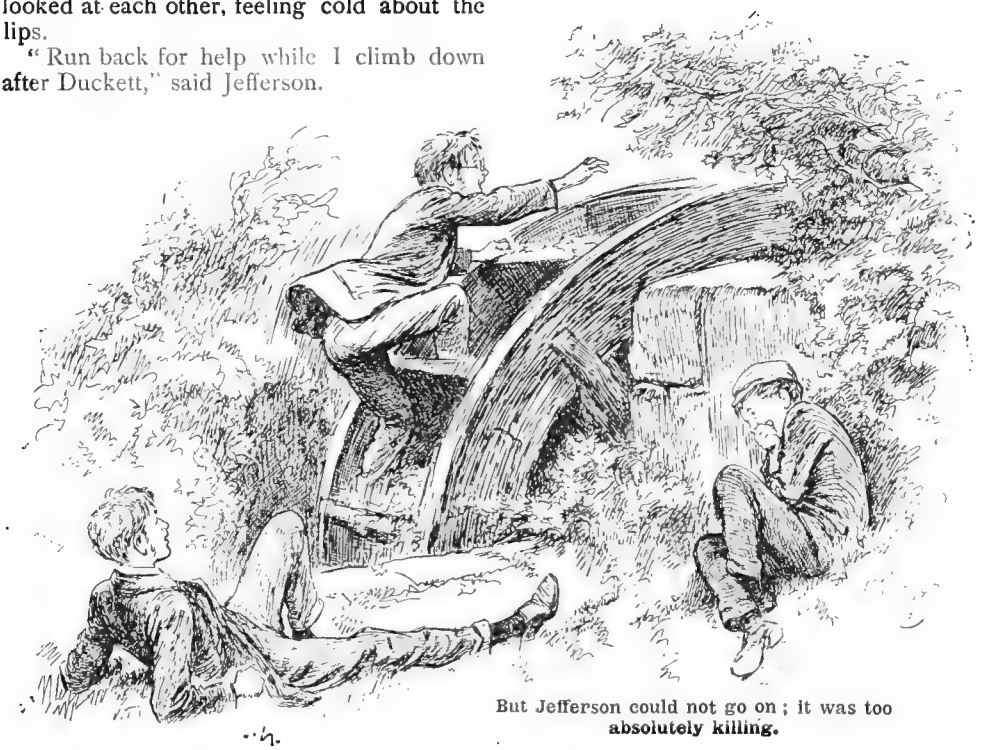
desperately at the spokes as they swung heavily past. Jefferson glanced over his shoulder. For a moment he saw Duckett's hands fighting up the water-boxes; then he was gone; and Jefferson shut his teeth tight and pulled frantically with both hands. At last they got it under control, and Jefferson flung himself on to the bank, shouting for Duckett.

"We didn't mean to do anything really caddish, old chap!" he shouted. "Are you hurt, or dead at all? Why don't you shout back, you silly ass?"

There was no answer, and the two boys looked at each other, feeling cold about the lips.

"Run back for help while I climb down after Duckett," said Jefferson.



But Jefferson could not go on; it was too absolutely killing.

Baines refused to go back. If one went down both were going, so there was an end of it.

The bell was clanging for afternoon school as the two boys climbed down the spokes as far as the axle and thence to the ground. The great wheel loomed enormous over their heads, and the light that glinted through the bushes on to the muddy floor was sufficient to show them in an instant that Duckett was not there.

"Anyhow there are no odd bits of Duckett lying about, which is relieving," said Jefferson. "But if he isn't inside, and he hasn't got out, the question is where is he?"

"It seems to me," said Baines, after consideration, "that he simply must be somewhere."

"I should say that was distinctly probable," Jefferson replied, "but the question is, where?"

Baines remarked "Um!" which on the whole seemed the only answer adequate to meet the case. Then the search began. They splashed through puddles, poked into every crevice of the wheel, pulled at the ferns and mosses on the walls, and finally groped their way into the darkness at the lower end of the pit.

Curiously enough the pit did not end abruptly as they had expected. The further they went the darker it grew, till at last they could see nothing at all.

The air was stale, like the air of a vault, and the passage grew narrower, and the roof sloped till they were obliged to crawl through the mud on all fours and in single file.

But Jefferson had been thinking; and it seemed to him that where a water-wheel was sunk into the ground there must be a tunnel for the water to run out. Still they crawled on till the putrid air made them feel dull and lifeless. Stones and earth fell upon them from the roof, and sickened them with the dread of being buried alive; while the

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They . . . drew themselves out into the world, half-blinded with the sun.

darkness was so intense that great rings and comets danced bewilderingly in front of their eyes.

They were over their wrists in mud, and still no sign of escape, when suddenly Jefferson gave a shout. Far down in the distance appeared a little point of light no bigger than a star.

Pushing with their shoulders between the narrow walls they panted towards the light; gained it at last, and drew themselves out into the world, half-blinded with the sun.

At first the place seemed unfamiliar. Then it dawned upon them with a shock. The tunnel must have run in a straight line from the blackberry clump, under the football field, under the school buildings, and right down into the valley beyond.

Three minutes' running brought them to the playground, in the middle of which stood old man Duckett, like themselves, covered with mud, and surrounded by a group of masters.

He was expostulating feebly. If they would go into the middle of the blackberry clump, he said, they would find Baines and Jefferson; he had taken his dying oath not to say any more—so he simply couldn't! "This was the unkindest cut of all."

"It was all our fault," cried Jefferson as he ran up.

"But we didn't know it would turn out caddish," put in Baines.

"We're jolly glad old man Duckett wasn't broken on the wheel," said Jefferson.

"But we had a narrow squeak of being buried alive," added Baines.

All of which information, and a great deal more, only left the masters more mystified than ever. Anyhow, there they were, and the next thing to do was to shout the news to Mr. Legge, who had gone into the blackberry clump after them.

"Are you there, sir?" Baines shouted, trying to peer through the water-boxes of the great wheel into the depths below. "We are all right."

At first there was no answer; but after a time strange sounds began to issue from the clump as of a man who tries to shout when there is no breath left in him.

Jefferson looked at Baines, and Baines looked at Jefferson, and the look that passed between them was one of fearful joy.

"The Human Mouse-trap has caught a master," Jefferson murmured slowly, and he shut his eyes and smiled.

Baines sighed softly.

"There are some things," he said, "that one would give pounds to see. Just imagine old Legge dancing up that wheel, while all the while it kept on going faster and faster! Oh, why weren't we there to see?"

Minutes passed, but no Mr. Legge appeared, and when he did emerge the two boys turned away out of sheer pity.

"Must have had a twenty-minutes' run," Baines said in an awed whisper. But Jefferson knew that the Human Mouse-trap had caught its last victim.

That night an edict went forth. The blackberry clump, with its mysterious water-sluice, was forbidden for ever.

Moreover, that very evening, old man Duckett became the possessor of a historic pig-sticker.

Baines and Jefferson appeared at late Prep. with their hands bound up in lint, which meant learning Latin grammar for an hour and a half; and, as Jefferson exultantly observed, "You know what *that* means!"

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His Lordship's Sea-Dip

By Victor L. Whitechurch.

Showing that Clothes do not Altogether Make the Man.

The Bishop of Frattenbury was seated at the breakfast table, reading the *Daily Herald*, and occasionally addressing stray remarks to his wife. They were staying at the Sea View Hotel, at Wynnstrand, which everybody knows is a charming little South Coast watering place. His lordship was in an excessively good humour that morning, chiefly on account of a leading article in the *Daily Herald* on the subject of the Licensing Bill, that coincided with a speech he had recently made.

"My dear," he was saying, "this article is the most intelligent I have read for some time. It is entirely based on my own view of the case."

"Now, that is very satisfactory."

"I have always maintained that if once the country could be induced to adopt—ah—um—" concluded the Bishop suddenly, his spouse being engaged in reading a letter.

Presently he looked up again from his paper.

"Dear me. I see a convict has escaped from Hartland Prison and is still at large."

"Hartland? Why, that's very near here!"

"Quite so. Oh, here's a letter from the editor of the *Daily Herald* about that interview!"

"What interview?"

"Didn't I tell you? He wants to publish a series of special articles on the Licensing Question, embodying the opinions of our party. So I told him he might send his representative down here. He writes to say he's coming this morning."

The Bishop rose at this point, clasped his hands behind him, as was his wont, and walked to the window. He was a man who carried his fifty-seven odd years well, for in his younger days he had been a noted athlete, and he was still strong and vigorous. A fortnight's rest by the sea from the hard work of his diocese had quite tanned his face, and his own dean would scarcely have known him. He stood gazing out of the window for a minute, and then turned to his wife.

"My dear, it's such a lovely morning that I think I shall start for a long walk at once. I should love a ramble under the cliffs immensely. We'd better ask this good man who's coming, to lunch with us."

He rang the bell, and the waiter appeared.

"Oh, there's a gentleman coming to see me this morning, who will lunch with us. If he should call before I return you might tell him I've gone for a walk under the West Cliffs, but that I shall be back to luncheon."

"Very good, my lord."

Five minutes later the Bishop's wife stood

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at the window admiring her spouse from hat to gaiters, as he started from the hotel.

The Bishop was a good walker, and soon left the town behind him as he tramped over the crisp, grey sands. At one point, some two miles from the outskirts of Wynnstrand, a little winding path ran up the cliffs, and the Bishop mounted to the top to admire the view.

Here he met a coastguard, who was strolling about on duty, and, being in a very beaming frame of mind, he had a chat with the man. There were no houses near, except a few wooden huts adjoining the coastguard signals. The Bishop at length descended the path again, sat down on some rocks, and—for even Bishops are human—produced a pipe and a tobacco pouch. In a few minutes he was smoking contentedly.

Now, whether it was the warmth of the day, or the gentle ripple of the incoming tide about thirty yards from where he was seated, or whether it was the effect of his pipe, or whether he forgot for the moment he was a Bishop, will never be known; but certain it was that the longer his lordship sat and smoked, the stronger became his lordship's desire to have a bathe. He had been a first-rate swimmer in his day, and what swimmer could resist the allurements of that balmy summer morning?

At all events, if anyone had been near they would have seen the Bishop knock out the ashes from his pipe, take a careful glance round to see that he was not observed; they would have heard him mutter: "I *must* have a dip. There's no one here—yes, I *must*. I shall easily get dry in the sun,"—and then—tell it not in Gath!—they would have seen his lordship deliberately unbuttoning his episcopal gaiters and untying the strings of his episcopal apron—if, indeed, this garment is worn in the usual domestic fashion by his lordship's fraternity. But this is a dread mystery which we will not presume to unravel—or untie!

But, although the Bishop knew it not, he was being observed most closely and intently by an individual not twenty yards away from him. This personage was crouching behind some rocks in a little recess in the cliff in the background, and, like the Bishop, was dressed in a distinctive uniform, only whereas his lordship was garbed as a representative of Church *and* State, the other was arrayed in the habiliments of the latter only, which consisted of a knickerbocker suit ornamented with that peculiar species of arrow which is known by the name of "broad." He was a man considerably past middle age, and his closely-cropped hair had turned a decided grey.

A wicked smile lit up his countenance as the Bishop finally entered the water. There was no doubt that his lordship enjoyed it immensely, and he was soon swimming out to sea. So engrossed was he that he never noticed the individual we have mentioned step forth from his hiding-place, gather up all the episcopal outer garments, including even the hat, and rush off with them as fast as he could go, until he disappeared in a bend of the rocks which formed one side of the little creek in which his lordship was enjoying a morning dip.

When the latter returned from his swim he was not a little surprised to see nothing but his undergarments lying on the shore. His first ejaculation was one of surprise, his second one of distinct indignation. Here was a pretty fix for a dignified prelate! He looked right and left, but there was no sign of the thief. A few minutes later the astonished coastguardsman on the top of the cliff saw an extraordinary figure coming up the little path.

"My good man," said the Bishop, coming to a standstill before him, "I am, as you see, in a most unfortunate predicament. Someone has stolen my clothes while I was bathing."

"Did you see who it was, sir?"

"No. There was no sign of anyone when I came out of the water—and—and—well, I couldn't very well run about looking for the thief as I am now."

The man eyed him critically.

"He ain't left you none too many clothes," he said. Then he stepped to the edge of the cliff and took a good look over the sands and rocks below.

"There ain't no sign of him," he said. "You see, sir, there's so many places down there where he could hide. Or if he's made tracks for Wynnstrand round the bend yonder, so long as he keeps close to the cliff you couldn't see him from here. I expect he hid and waited till you came up, and then started off."

"Couldn't you—couldn't you run off at once, and see if you could find him? I'd make it well worth your while."

"Very sorry, sir, but I daren't leave my post, and there ain't no one to send. Your best way is to get back to Wynnstrand as quick as you can and put the police on the track."

"But how am I to do that?" pleaded the unhappy prelate. "I can't go like this!"

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"Well, *'twould* look a bit rum, sir," replied the man, with a smile; "but I'll tell ye what. There's a few clothes in the hut here you can have. They ain't exactly the same cut as yours, but you could walk to Wynnstrand in 'em."

"Well, it's exceedingly awkward. Let me see these garments."

"I'm 'fraid they ain't up to much," said the man as he led the way into the hut. "You see, sir, they're a few things we keep here in case we get wet, so's to have a change."

The Bishop stared in consternation when the "few things" were produced. They consisted of a pair of sailor's trousers, with a patch on one knee, a jersey, and an old blue blouse. With the assistance of the coastguard the Bishop managed to struggle into these garments, and then the man said:

"Here's a sou'-wester or an old straw hat. Which will you have, sir?"

The Bishop feebly appropriated the latter, and his costume was complete.

"Why, it quite suits you, sir," exclaimed the coastguard. "You look for all the world like an old sailor."

How his lordship felt was quite another consideration; however, he had determined to make the best of an awkward dilemma, so he said to the other:

"Well, I'm very much obliged to you, my man, and I should like to give you something, only my purse was stolen with the clothes! However, if you will come or send to the Sea View Hotel, you shall have these things back, and a suitable reward for your trouble."

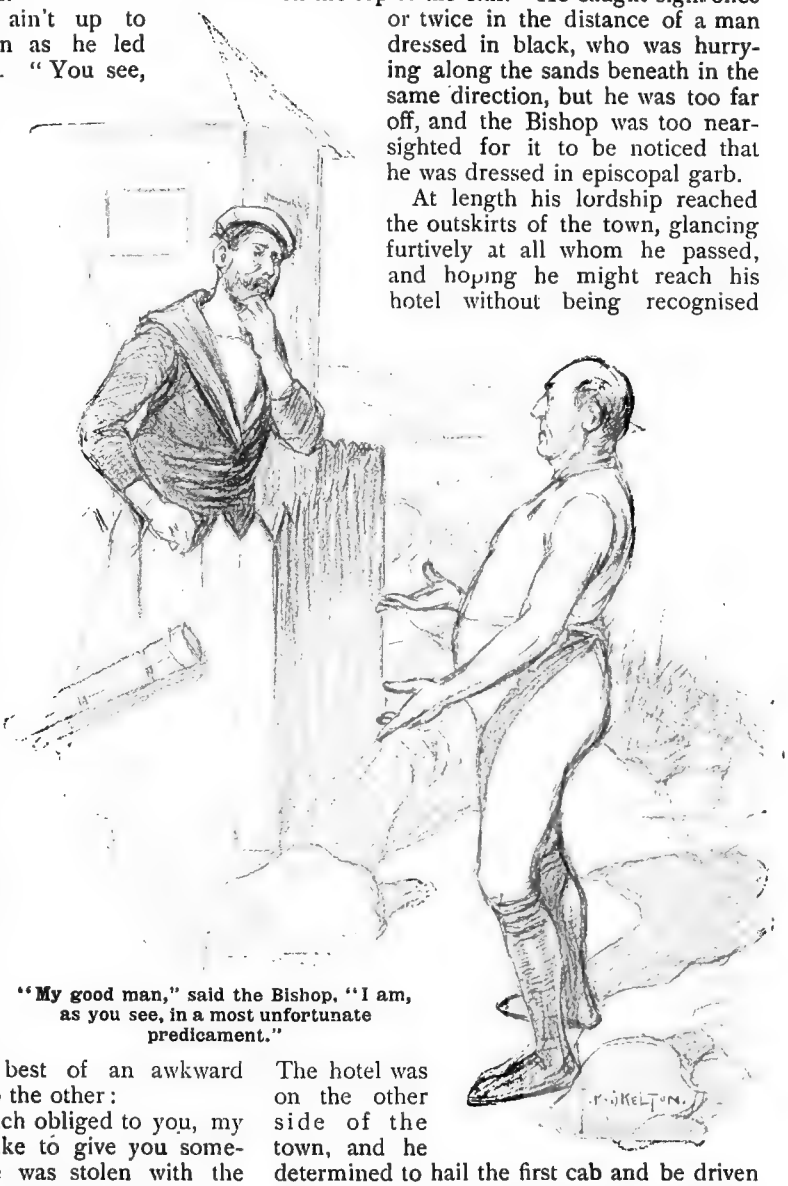
"Thank you, sir. Who shall I ask for?"

"The—er—Bishop of Frattenbury," said his lordship, as he turned on his heel.

"The Bishop of Frattenbury!" said the other to himself, with a broad grin, as he watched him depart. "Lor', who'd take him for my Lord Bishop in them togs!"

The Bishop walked towards Wynnstrand on the top of the cliff. He caught sight once or twice in the distance of a man dressed in black, who was hurrying along the sands beneath in the same direction, but he was too far off, and the Bishop was too near-sighted for it to be noticed that he was dressed in episcopal garb.

At length his lordship reached the outskirts of the town, glancing furtively at all whom he passed, and hoping he might reach his hotel without being recognised



"My good man," said the Bishop, "I am, as you see, in a most unfortunate predicament."

The hotel was on the other side of the town, and he determined to hail the first cab and be driven there. Presently he saw an empty one standing near the parade.

"I want you to drive me to the Sea View Hotel," he said to the driver.

"Sea View Hotel. Oh, you looks like it,

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old man, don't yer? P'raps you're a stayin' there with your family?"

"Of course I am," replied the Bishop, forgetting for a moment his extraordinary appearance. "But that's nothing to do with you. Drive me there at once," and he opened the door to get in.

"No, you don't," shouted the driver, jumping down and pulling him back. "I don't mind drivin' you, but I'll see the colour of your money first. I've been done that way before."

"I—er—haven't any money with me," said the unfortunate Bishop, "but I'll pay you double fare when I get there."

"Oh, that's a good un! P'raps you wants me to believe you're a Hadmiral of the Fleet in disguise. Why——"

At this moment a hearty voice broke in:

"Won't he let ye go, shipmet? Well, it sha n't be said we wouldn't help ye, shall it, Tom?"

Another voice exclaimed with unnecessary adjectival emphasis that it certainly shouldn't.

The Bishop turned and encountered two sailors who had overheard the dispute—two typical "Jacks ashore." As he met their gaze the first speaker suddenly caught him by the hand.

"Why, blowed if it ain't old Joe Dickson! You've heered me speak of him many a time, ain't yer, Tom?"

"Aye, lad."

"But I'm *not* Joe Dickson, and——"

"Ain't ye? Well, you're the living image of the old chap, you've got the same wopping big nose as he had, so I'll act towards ye as I would to him. Now, where d'ye want to go?"

"The Sea View Hotel," said the Bishop, anxious to escape; "but I won't——"

"So ye shall. *We'll both take ye there!* Here's the money, cabby. Get in, old shipmet—or maybe ye'll have a wet at the public yonder first?"

The unfortunate prelate protested that all he wanted was to get to the hotel as speedily as possible.

"Well, we'll all have something there," said the other, as they got in. "Now then, off ye go!"

There was only one thing upon which the Bishop congratulated himself, and that was, that the cab was a closed one. That drive seemed to last hours.

As to the other two, the first speaker employed the time in explaining that he had come over to Wynnstrand to court Tom's sister, and gave the Bishop a hearty invitation to be present at the wedding if it ever came off, adding: "If ye can dance a hornpipe as good as Joe Dickson, I'm blest if ye won't be the life of the party," while Tom himself performed the journey with his head out of the window, shouting friendly greetings to policemen and men of nautical cut, or hurling unrecordable language at the driver.

At length they drew up at the steps of the hotel, from the door of which a lady was just coming out.

"My wife!" ejaculated the Bishop.

"Oh, that's your missus, is it? Come along, Tom—let's take him in. The old girl's a smart 'un, ain't she?"

And, as that personage stood on the steps, she beheld the extraordinary spectacle of her husband, dressed in shabby seafaring clothes, advancing towards her between two excessively cheerful sailors who insisted upon holding his arms.

At length he managed to disengage himself, and rushed in with a—"Tell those men to wait," to the astonished porter, and a "Wot! Ain't ye goin' to have a drink?" from the hilarious Tom, and was closely followed by his wife.

The two sailors waited rather angrily, and were beginning to heap vituperations on their companion for leaving them so abruptly, when a waiter appeared with an envelope:

"This is for you, with many thanks for your kindness to the Bi—the gentleman you have just brought home."

Out fell a couple of sovereigns when Tom opened the envelope.

"Well!" said the other, "maybe he was a-masqueradin' in disguise; a-havin' a bit of a lark. But he's come down handsome, so let's go and drink his bloomin' health."

As for the Bishop, he changed his clothes and made explanations to his wife. When they sat down to lunch he suddenly remembered the interviewer.

"Didn't that gentleman come?" he asked the waiter.

"Yes, my lord. He came an hour ago."

"Then where is he?"

"We told him in which direction your lordship had gone, and he said he would go out and meet your lordship, as his time was limited."

"Oh! When he returns, send him here at once."

But he did not return. He had started off hoping to meet the Bishop, and had shortly afterwards encountered a personage in episcopal garb, hurrying along the sands.

Now he had never seen the Bishop of

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Frattenbury in his life. So he stopped this personage.

"I beg your pardon—the Bishop of Frattenbury, I believe?"

"Eh—oh—yes—yes," answered the other, about to pass on.

"I am the representative of the *Daily Herald*, and have come to interview your lordship, as arranged."

A slight grin stole across the face of the other.

"I see—yes—I remember," he said. "By the way, could you tell me when the next train for London starts?"

The journalist drew out a pocket time-table and told him. The "Bishop" consulted his watch, and apparently made up his mind.

"Very well," he said, "let's sit down, young man. I'll give you ten minutes of my valuable time. Now then, fire away."

The other looked askance at his companion. He thought him rather strange for a bishop. Then he began:

"It's about the Licensing Bill, my lord. I want to ask——"

"Good old bloke!" exclaimed the "Bishop" suddenly. He was fumbling in his pockets, and had just discovered pipe and tobacco-pouch.

"Eh?"

"Oh, nothing. Go ahead. I don't know what you're talking about," and he filled his pipe complacently.

"The Licensing Bill, my lord."

"Oh, yes. What about it?"

"We are anxious to publish an expression of your lordship's views on the subject."

The "Bishop" blew a heavy cloud of smoke with much satisfaction.

"Well," he said, "to tell you the truth, young man, it doesn't interest me very much."

"*What!* But your lordship said the other day it was a subject of vital importance to the clergy, and——"

"Dare say I *did*. But I've altered my mind. You're going to publish this, I suppose?"

"Of course, my lord."

"Well," replied the other, deliberately, "you can say that I wish the clergy wouldn't interfere with what doesn't concern them. Parsons are a nuisance sometimes. *I've* found 'em so"—he was thinking of the gaol chaplain. "Let them practise what they preach, *I* say."

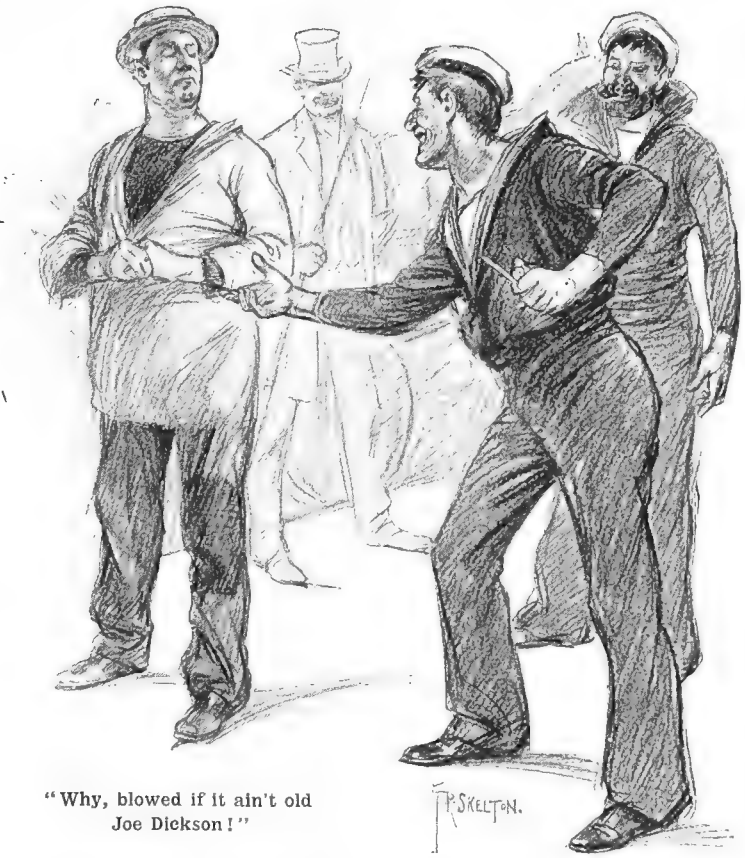
"But, my lord," ejaculated the astonished interviewer, "you are one of the leaders of the temperance movement, a total abstainer, I believe."

"Ah," said the "Bishop" drily, "you're right there, young man. I've been a total abstainer for three years," and he puffed at his pipe viciously as he remembered the fact.

"Is this Licensing Bill going to close the pubs?" he went on suddenly.

"Why, your lordship knows it means a reduction in the number of them."

"Going to do the working man out of his



"Why, blowed if it ain't old Joe Dickson!"

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"Ah," said the "Bishop" drily, "You're right there, young man. I've been a total abstainer for three years."

beer, eh?" said the other, contemptuously. "I sha'n't support it, then!"

"But surely your lordship takes an interest in the reduction of licences, and will support the Government?"

"Young man," said the "Bishop," taking his pipe out of his mouth, and without the vestige of a smile, "I've been working hard for the Government for years, and now I've had enough of it. I shall withdraw my support, and let the Government get on without my services. The Government knows what it's about, and may do just what it pleases. As to licences, what does it matter to them if the working man gets his beer?"

"You—your lordship has nothing to say on compensation?" faltered the journalist.

"I could say a good deal on that subject if I chose, perhaps. But I'm not going to."

"But the question of a time limit?" exclaimed the young man, who began to wonder if he were in some hideous dream.

"Ah," said the "Bishop" grimly, "that's another thing. I've been in favour of a time limit for years. There's some sense in that. You can put it down that I shall vote for a time limit whenever I get the chance."

"Then you would be in favour of extending such a limit to fourteen years?" asked the other, who thought that at last he was beginning to get some information on the subject.

"Fourteen years!" cried the "Bishop" with a laugh, "not much. A month's quite long enough."

"But—my lord—it couldn't be done!" gasped the journalist.

"Oh, *couldn't* it?" said the "Bishop," with another broad grin, "*I* know better. Now then, time's up! Good morning!"

And he was off to the station, leaving the perplexed journalist gazing at him in wonder. He just caught the London train, and was well on his journey before the real Bishop had time to change, and to give information to the police about the loss of his clothes.

Next morning the Bishop was astonished to read the following in his morning paper:—

The Licensing Bill.
Extraordinary statements by the Bishop of Frattenbury.

Yesterday the Bishop of Frattenbury was interviewed by our representative on the subject of the Licensing Bill, and those who have known and appreciated the attitude he has hitherto maintained towards the question will be surprised and grieved at the peculiar views to which he now gives utterance.

He commenced by saying that the whole question of Licensing Reform was really of little interest to him, urging that if the clergy refrained from interfering in what did not concern them it would be better for all classes of the community, and that if they practised what they preached, and let others alone, they would be far more respected.

He professed the most utter unconcern as to the vital questions of compensation and reduction of licenses, saying that he supposed the Government knew what they were about, and, so long as the working-man got his beer, it really mattered very little. With regard to a time limit——

Here his lordship laid down his paper on the table with great force, and it is rumoured made a remark somewhat unbecoming to a Bishop.

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CAP AND BELLS

AN EXPERT OPINION.

"Do you think that perpetual motion will ever become known to the world?"

"No," answered the engineer. "If anybody should discover perpetual motion he would be so afraid of being sent to a lunatic asylum that he would keep it a profound secret."

* * * *

A GLASS "MOLECULE."

"What are you studying now?" asked Mrs. Jones.

"We have taken up the subject of molecules," answered her son.

"I hope you will be very attentive, and practise constantly. I tried to get your father to wear one, but he couldn't make it stay in his eye."

* * * * *

POOR OLD GODS!

"The mills of the gods grind slowly," quoted the long-faced man in the black coat.

"Why don't they put in some modern machinery?" asked the Yankee. "Up our way they turn out 500,000 barrels a day."

* * * * *

A PRETTY QUESTION.

"Are you a married man?" asked the absent-minded K.C., who was putting a witness through a searching cross-examination.

"No, sir," replied the witness. "I am a bachelor."

"Very well, sir," continued the lawyer. "Now tell me how long you have been a bachelor, and what the circumstances were that induced you to become one?"

ALL SHE CARED ABOUT.

SHE: "Did you see me in the water this morning, Mr. Shortsight?"

MR. SHORTSIGHT: "Rather. You looked just like a goddess rising from the sea."

SHE (disappointed): "Indeed. Then you didn't notice my new bathing costume, after all."

* * * * *

WOULDN'T CHANCE IT.

TOM: "Why is it you don't let your boy go fishing?"

JACK: "I want him to grow up a truthful man."

* * * * *

NO PRACTICE.

HE: "It is hard to keep a secret sometimes, isn't it?"

SHE: "I don't know; I've never tried it."

SUBURBAN SNOBBERY.

"My Sybil is quite fashionable with her motor-car, isn't she?"

"Yes, dear, but I'm afraid my Angelina Montmorency will have to cut her, as I do not allow her to mix with anybody but carriage folk."

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A LIFE-LONG PUNISHMENT.

***She:* "Didn't I tell you not to propose to me again?"**

***He:* "You said something of the kind, but, of course, it made no impression on me."**

***She:* "Oh, it didn't! Well, I'll give you a lesson now that you won't forget. You'll never propose to me again."**

***He:* "What are you going to do?"**

***She:* "I'm going to accept you."**

* * * * *

THE SQUELCHING OF JONES.

Jones had seen the play before, but Smith had not. So, of course, it was Jones' duty to explain the plot to Smith, and to repeat each joke as it was uttered on the stage, lest Smith should miss the point. And Smith will vouch for the fact that Jones did his duty like a man, at least, during the first and second acts.

A few minutes before the curtain rose on the third and last act, Jones, who had just given his friend a brief synopsis of what was about to happen, felt someone touch him on the shoulder. Turning round in his seat, he found himself face to face with a solemn-faced individual who looked rather like a clergyman.

"My young friend," said the stranger, "I trust you will pardon my addressing you. I cannot go without thanking you for the very pleasant evening I have passed."

"I—I don't quite understand," stammered Jones, thinking that perhaps the speaker had mistaken him for the author of the play.

"It has been my privilege," continued the stranger, "to overhear your extremely interesting and instructive comments on the play, and I feel myself deeply indebted to you, although I am fully aware that your remarks were not intended for my ears. Nevertheless, as I have profited by them, I feel that the least I can do is to thank you.

"But for you the performance would have been all Greek to me, and I should not have known when to laugh and when to cry. I should not have been able to distinguish between the hero and the villain, nor to know when the latter had been foiled. Above all, by reason of your brief but lucid synopsis of the last act, I am now enabled to leave the theatre and catch my train without being left in suspense as to the outcome of the play.

"This alone would be enough to earn my lifelong gratitude. Before I go, let me offer you my card. I hope I shall some day have an opportunity of serving you in my professional capacity. Nothing, I assure you, could give me greater pleasure. Good night!"

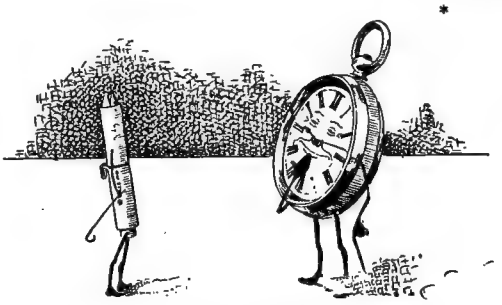
After the stranger had gone, Jones glanced at the card. It bore this legend:

J. W. TOOMBS, *Undertaker.*

Smith saw it too. Then he turned his head away.

"What the dickens are you sniggering about?" demanded Jones.

* * * *



EXPLAINED.

***Watchkey:* "Hullo, old chap, you're looking very bright."**

***Watch:* "Yes, I've just had my face and hands cleaned."**

* * * *

TWO VIEWS.

BILLS: "Did you notice the pleased expression on her face when I told her that she did not look any older than her daughter?"

WILLS: "No, I was looking at the expression on the daughter's face."

* * *

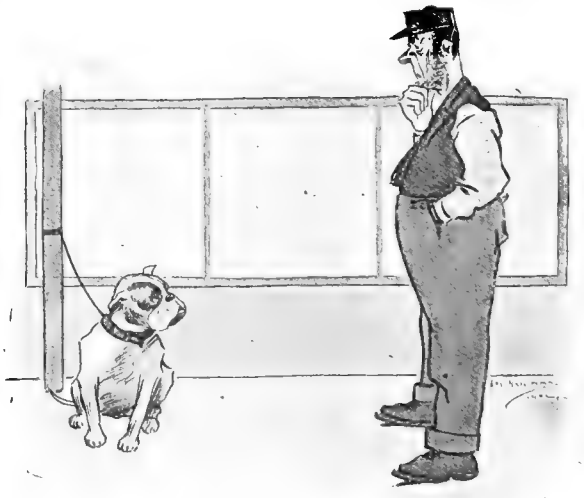
OF COURSE.

"So Bragley was out fishing yesterday. How many did he bring back?"

"Oh, about a dozen."

"A dozen what? Trout?"

"No, fish stories."



"With Care!"

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UNSCIENTIFIC.

"What were you arguing so violently about with Smithers, professor?"

"He called me a blooming jackass."

"You ought to have knocked him down."

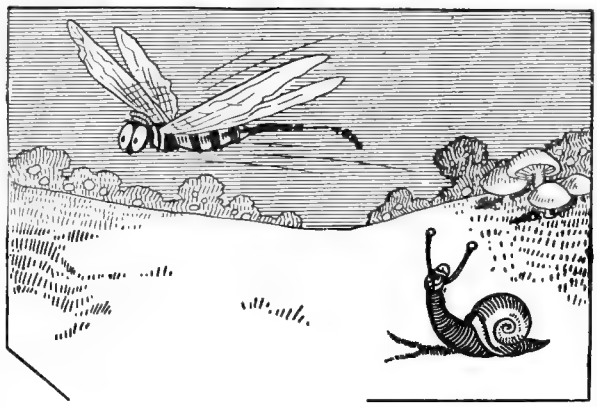
"Oh, I didn't mind it personally. It was the unscientific nature of his statement that annoyed m ."

* * *

QUITE PROPER.

KEEDICK: "Young Browne added 'e' to his name after he inherited his uncle's big fortune."

FOSDICK: "That's quite right. Rich people are entitled to more ease than poor people."



MOTORING IN INSECTLAND.

Constable Snail: "Hi! you there! You're exceeding the speed limit!"

* * * * *

SOCIETY JOTTING.

"Is your wife entertaining this season?" asked Jones,
And Smythe, who would like to be merry,
Replied in emphatic but dolorous tones,
"I can truthfully answer, not very!"

* * * * *

RED TAPE AGAIN!

CLARK (to his employer, leaving the office): "Oh, Mr. System, haven't you forgotten your umbrella? It's raining."

MR. SYSTEM: "Can't help it. I have made a resolution to have one here and one at home, to provide for all emergencies. Now, if I take this one they'll both be at home."

OH! MONSTER!

MILLIE: "What does this motto on the ring mean?"

WILLIE: "Faithful to the last."

MILLIE: "The idea! I thought I was the first!"

* * *

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.

"In about 280 years," said the scientist, "when the world's population exceeds 5,994,000,000, the earth will be unable to find nourishment for her people, and they will be forced either to cannibalism or starvation."

"And just think, papa," said the daughter, "what troub e there'll be for us to get through the crowds on our bicycles!"

* * * * *

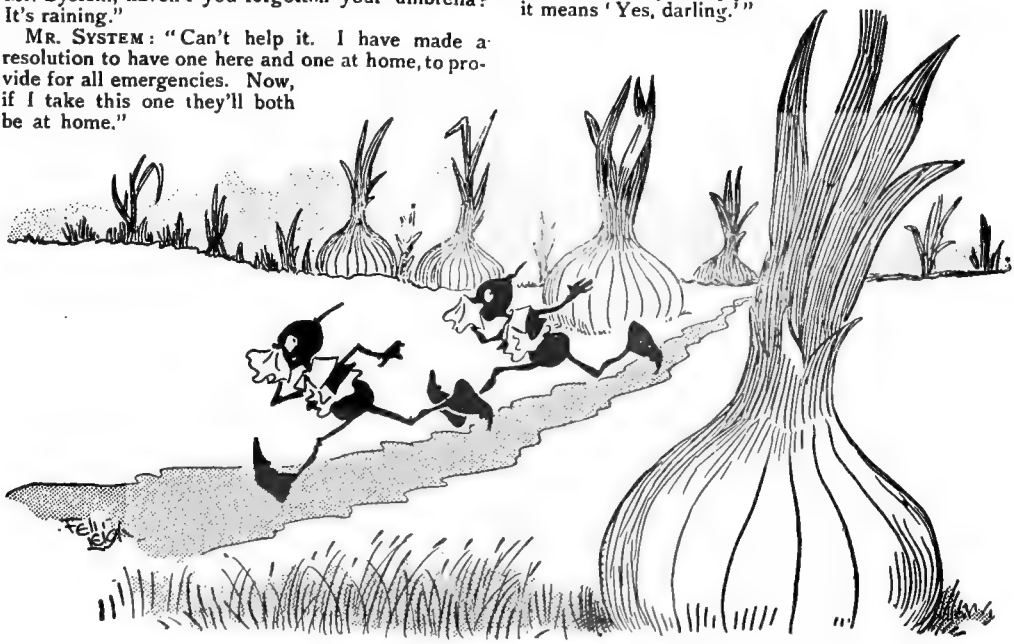
SIMPLE SIGNALS.

CALLER: "Why are you waving your handkerchief so wildly?"

MURILLA: "Since papa has forbidden Jack the house, we have arranged a code of signals."

CALLER: "What is it?"

MURILLA: "When he waves his handkerchief five times that means 'Do you love me?' and when I wave frantically in reply, it means 'Yes, darling.'"



THROUGH THE ONION BED.

Brownie Tourists: "Great grasshoppers! This district must be without even the most elementary ideas of sanitation."

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Don't Miss this Page simply because it is the Last in the Number.

KIND-HEARTED PEOPLE.

THERE are many kind-hearted people in the world in spite of what the cynics may say. Here's an instance in point. You, doubtless, remember my mentioning the letter from an Australian, in which he described the delights of reading THE ROYAL in the depths of the Bush.

Shortly after the number was published I received a note from a lady reader offering to pay my correspondent's annual subscription. Unhappily, I was unable to avail myself of her kindness, the Australian having omitted to send me his address. If, however, this paragraph should catch his eye, I hope he will make good his omission and become an annual subscriber gratis.

MANY THANKS.

Yes, and I am sure it is merely kindness of heart which prompts so many of my readers to send me Christmas and New Year's cards. Unhappily, these hardly ever contain either names or addresses, and I am, therefore, compelled to accept most of them without the chance of making any return—without being able even to say a personal "thank you" to each kind friend. Collectively, however, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude, and to cap all the good wishes sent me with better wishes to those who sent them.

AN EXPENSIVE GIFT.

A few years ago one of the Editors of this office was the recipient of a Christmas present which cost him its full value. I tell the tale in fear and trembling, as I know that he does not much relish having it routed out of merciful oblivion. He was chaffed enough about this peculiar gift at the time to last him his life long.

The day before Christmas a heavy parcel addressed to him was brought into his room. On opening it he found that it contained a magnificent turkey, with a label attached to its fat breast bearing these words: "With best Christmas wishes from X. Y. Z." My good friend, the editor, was overjoyed, promptly dispatched the turkey home, and he and his happy family ate it to the bones during the ensuing holiday festivities. On the first day of his return to the office he found the following letter awaiting him on his desk:

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—

Yesterday I sent off a turkey to the FRESH AIR FUND, and hope it will prove acceptable.

Yours sincerely, X. Y. Z.

You can imagine my friend's feelings. To make a present of a turkey to the FRESH AIR FUND in mid-winter was more kind than sensible—to dispatch the letter after the turkey was somewhat thoughtless, I think. Anyhow, my friend, the editor, of course paid into the FRESH AIR FUND what he honestly considered the turkey's worth.

DO YOU WANT A PICTURE GALLERY?

Now here's a plan by which any of my readers can acquire a set of original drawings by some of the best-known black-and-white artists of the day—the originals, namely, of the various pictures which appear in THE ROYAL.

All you have to do is to go among your friends and get them to become annual subscribers of THE ROYAL. For each new annual subscriber you manage to get for us we present you with the original sketch of some illustration which has appeared in THE ROYAL immediately on the receipt of the subscription fee (6/6 Home, 7/- Abroad), which must be addressed to "The Editor, THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 17 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C." Inclosed you might send a list of three or four sketches which you are particularly anxious to obtain. Of course, I cannot promise that any of these will be available, they may all have been previously disposed of. But some good sketch you are certain to get. How does the idea strike you? It's a fair bargain and you don't come out of it the worse.

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A COCOA YOU CAN ENJOY

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"To the Hundred Thousand Ladies and Gentlemen who have written me from all parts of the world (sometimes enclosing stamps for a reply and sometimes expecting me to defray the return postage to the uttermost corners of the earth), requesting me to forward them immediately my Recipe for arresting the Fall of the Hair.

GREETING: KNOW ALL OF YOU—

In consequence of the immense demand for my remedy, 'Tatcho,' and the flooding of the market with Non-Genuine Preparations purporting to be the same as mine, but in reality nothing of the sort, **I have been compelled** to place the matter in the hands of a Syndicate. These gentlemen have agreed to supply the whole world with the Prescription absolutely made up according to my directions. It was the only way for me to protect the public and myself."—**Mr. GEORGE R. SIMS.**

Mr. Geo. R. Sims'

"Tatcho" For the Lack of .... Hair

Positively Produces Hair. ***Stops the Hair Falling Out.***
Prevents Hair Going Grey. ***Preserves its Natural Colour.***

THE "DAILY MAIL" INTERVIEWS THE DISCOVERER OF "TATCHO."

In a recent number of the *Referee* Mr. Geo. R. Sims, the famous poet and dramatist, journalist, and playwright, and the writer of "Mustard and Cress," over the signature of "Dagonet," explained to a wondering public that he had, to a band of philanthrophic millionaires, made over his right in a new "Hair Restorer."

Eager for an explanation, a representative of the *Daily Mail* sought out Mr. Sims, at Opposite the Ducks Villa, and asked him point-blank if it were true that he had forsaken the leafy paths of literature. Now, Mr. Geo. R. Sims, as many people know, is one of the busiest men in the kingdom, but, hastily affixing his signature to a letter, he looked up and extended a characteristically cordial welcome. Then he said, "I will explain. I found that I was rapidly going bald. I went to two Specialists, both of whom cheerfully assured me that I should be absolutely bald in two years. Then I discovered the preparation which has now been placed upon the market, and found that I had hit upon a remedy capable of working wonders. Look at my hair now.

After a time people got to know that I had discovered a Restorer that had worked wonders in my own case. Then the trouble began. Letters in thousands poured in to me from every quarter of the world, and it became quite evident that at the rate at which the demand was increasing I should very soon need a large staff of clerks to attend solely to the Hair Restorer department of correspondence. In consequence, I said to myself, Why should this thing go on? If the public wants my Hair Restorer the public shall have it, but the demand must be met in the ordinary business-like way. So I resolved to place the genuine article within the reach of all."

To undertake the introduction of "Tatcho" to the public, a wealthy syndicate has been formed, embracing several of the best-known scientific, literary, and commercial names in London, and, under the name of the George R. Sims' Hair Restorer Co., is introducing "Tatcho" to the toilet-table of every member of the King's vast empire.

"Tatcho" is personally vouched for, not alone by Mr. Geo. R. Sims, but also by

ROYALTY—
Prince Pless.
Princess Eugene Cristoforos-Palælogue.
Princess Vassel, &c.,&c.

SOCIETY—
Lady Gatacre.
Lady French.
Lady Dunglass.
Lady Powell.
Lady Collins.
Lady Sykes, &c., &c.

STAGE—
Mrs. Brown Potter.
Mrs. Norman Forbes Robertson, &c., &c.

ARMY—
Major-General Keate.
Col. H. Bagot Chester.
Col. Perry.
Lieut.-Col. Nedham.
Capt. Pembroke Marshall
Capt. Phillips.
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"TATCHO," Oily, a brilliant tonic, containing all the hair-growing properties of **"TATCHO,"** Non-Oily, with the addition of an oil product for dry hair.

"TATCHO" is not a dye, and contains no colouring matter or any ingredient harmful to the scalp.

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Arrangements have also been made whereby the principal Chemists and Stores throughout the Kingdom will now supply

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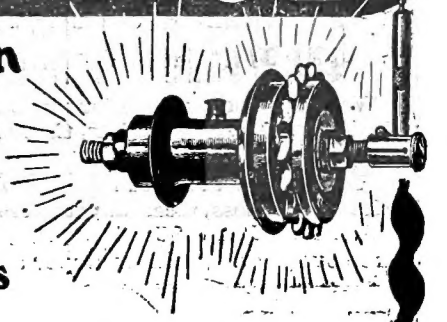

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